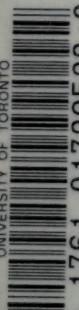


LETTERS FROM
THE FAR EAST

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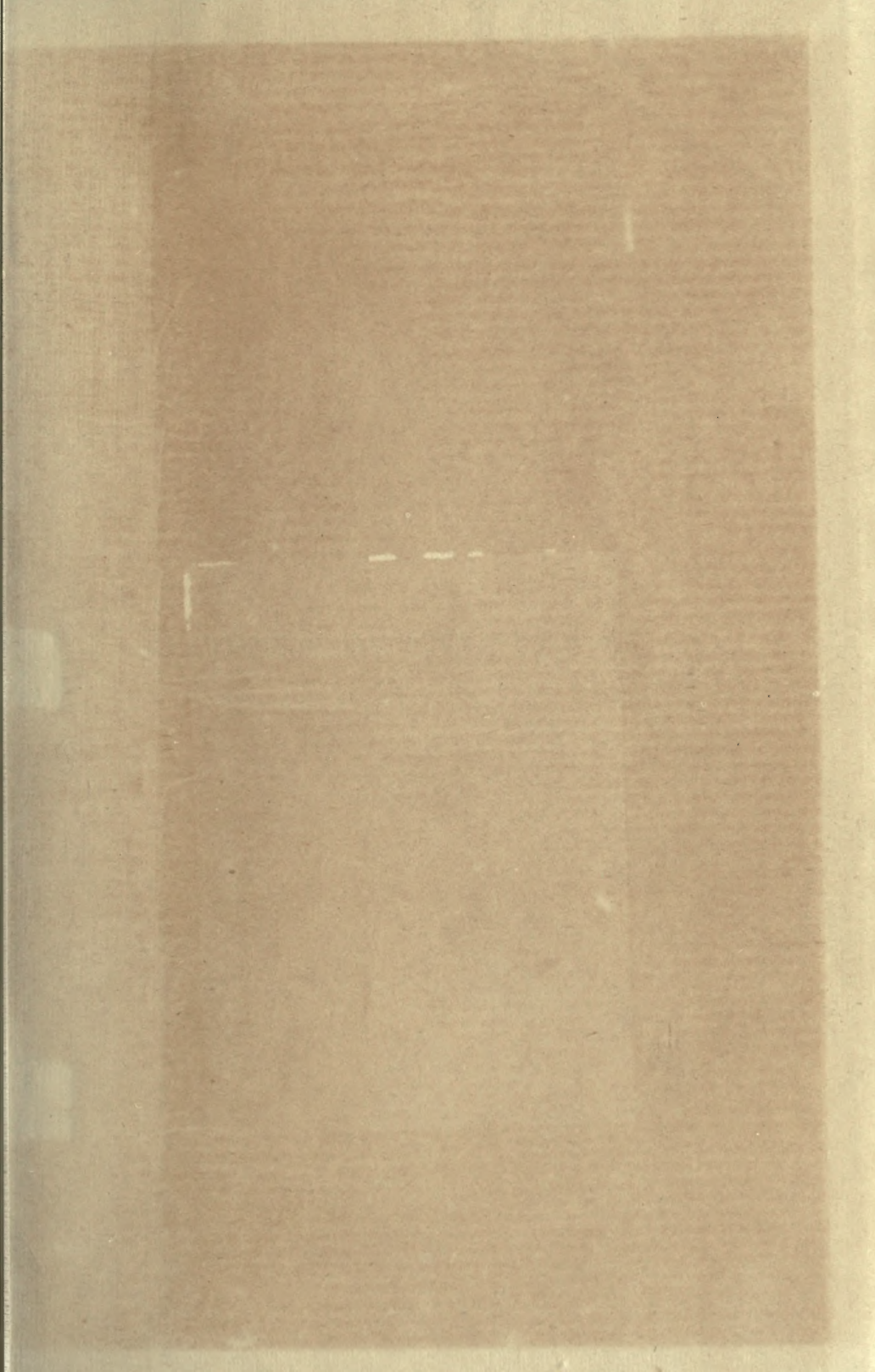
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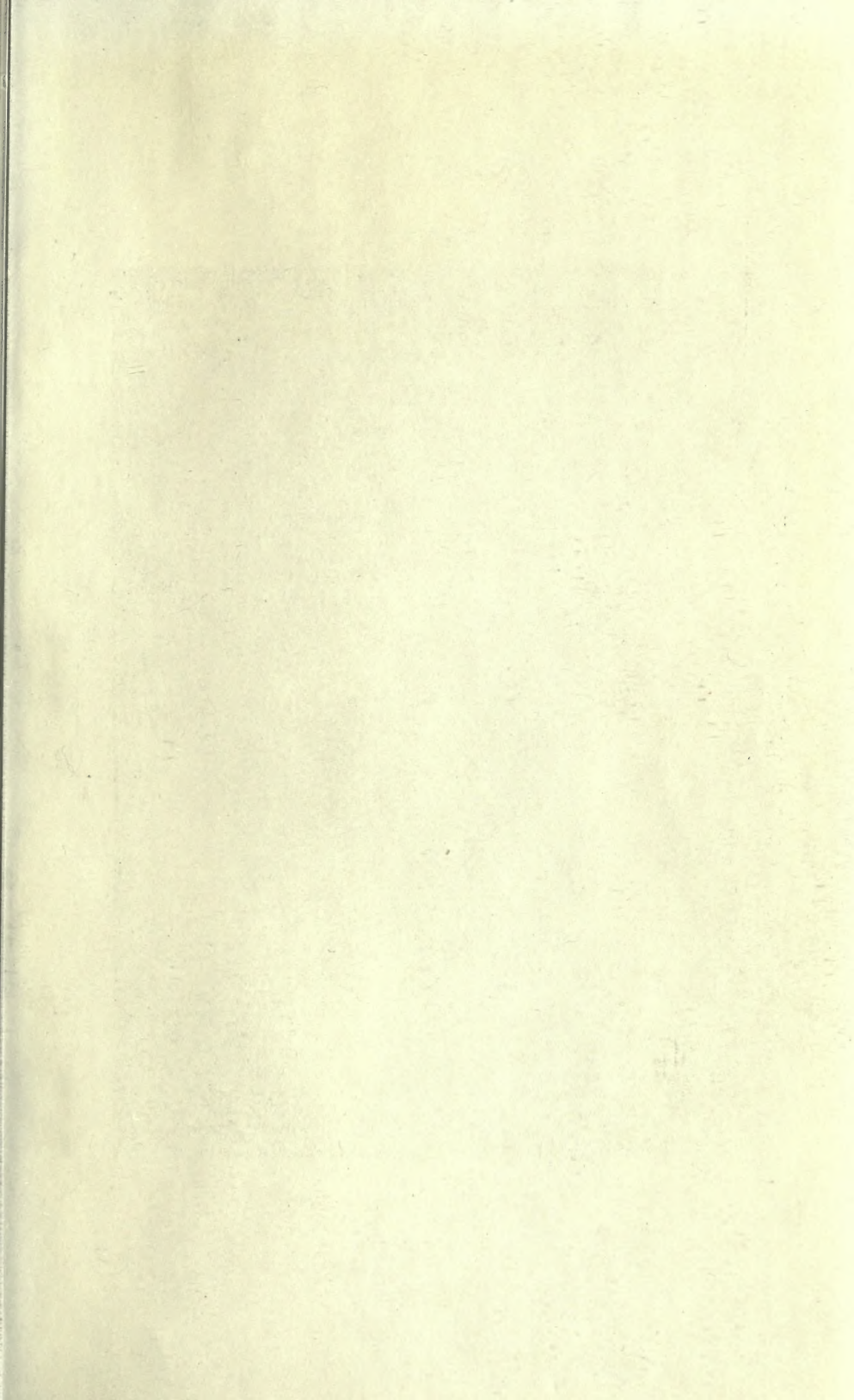
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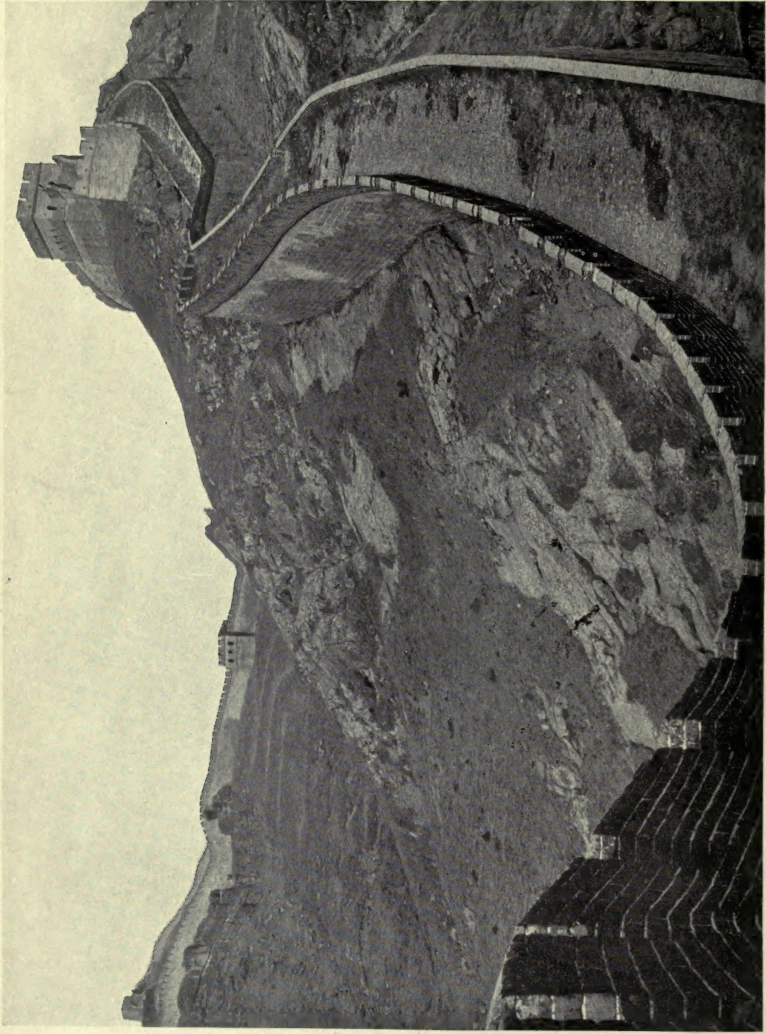


LETTERS FROM THE FAR EAST



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VIEW OF THE GREAT WALL.

LETTERS FROM THE FAR EAST

BY

SIR CHARLES ELIOT, K.C.M.G.

AUTHOR OF

'THE EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE,' 'TURKEY IN EUROPE,' ETC.

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LETTERS FROM THE FAR EAST

INTRODUCTION

THE letters here republished consist of contributions written for the *Westminster Gazette* during a brief visit to China and Japan in the summer and autumn of 1906, together with some additions. I had travelled before in Kashgaria and the frontier provinces of China, reaching them by crossing Asia, but this was my first visit to the coast and the better-known provinces of the empire. The main object of my journey was to obtain some practical knowledge of the languages and creeds of the Far East, and, in particular, to study the curious development which Buddhism has undergone in those countries; for it is difficult to form a correct and comprehensive idea of the part which this religion has played in the world by the mere study of Sanskrit and Pali literature. I trust that I may some day be able to publish the result of these and other investigations in a connected form.

Meantime, it is with some hesitation that I reproduce these fragmentary *impressions de voyage*. But, slight as they are, they seem to me to bring out in relief the fact which struck me most during my travels—namely, the distinctness of China and Japan

from the rest of Asia, and particularly from the Indian and Mohammedan East. This is, of course, obvious the moment it is pointed out, but by a vice of thought as well as of language such words as 'east' and 'orientals' are made to apply to all countries from Turkey to the Pacific. The enormous strides which were being made by Japan were long not appreciated at their true value, because she was thought to be an oriental country, and as such unable to overstep the limits which European ideas thought probable for oriental progress; and at the present day the gist of much criticism on the reform movement in China is that the Chinese are not likely to change, because eastern countries are unchanging. It is noticeable, too, that the Californian objections to the Japanese generally contain the word 'oriental' used in a reproachful sense. 'We do not want our children to be educated with orientals,' or 'We do not want these people in our country, because they are orientals,' is the burden of their complaint. It is to be feared that no change in terminology will overcome these racial antipathies, but it is important for the enemies as well as the friends of the Chinese and Japanese to realize that all arguments based on the assumption that they are similar to the inhabitants of the Mohammedan East are fallacious. Any absolute dichotomy of the Old World into east and west is misleading. Europe has indeed a certain homogeneity in spite of many differences, but even superficial uniformity is wanting in Asia.

At the present day the world may be said to contain four varieties or provinces of civilization: European (in which word I throughout include Americans, Australians, and the white races generally), Moham-

medan, Hindu, and Chinese. These spheres and systems overlap (India, for instance, is partly Mohammedan), but in a given area it can usually be affirmed that one or other of them is definitely dominant. Such fragments of civilization as may be found outside them do not appear to have had an independent origin, and the pre-Columbian civilizations of America seem to be a thing of the past as completely as the institutions of ancient Egypt or Babylonia. Of these civilizations, by far the most striking and extensive is the European. Its sphere includes all Europe, practically all America and Australia, and parts of Asia and Africa. It is characterized by the enormous development of the material and mechanical sides of life, and of the scientific studies which render them possible. Further, although there are great differences between the different countries in the degree of their political development, the rights of the individual are more clearly admitted than in other social organizations. Yet the individual is usually thought of as only a member of a society or movement. In Asia certain personalities may obtain far more complete independence and power than in Europe; and Asiatic speculation holds up, more frequently than our own, ideals consisting in the perfection of individual isolated character. Trade is generally recognized in Europe as one of the bases of national prosperity, and although military states exist, they are no longer contemptuous of commerce. This civilization is also invariably associated with Christianity, which must be regarded as an essentially European religion; for though it arose on Asiatic soil, it was transplanted to Europe almost at its birth, and it was in Europe that

its most conspicuous forms, notably the Roman Catholic Church, were evolved. It does not, however, appear that the material, scientific, and moral progress of Europe is due to Christianity. It has been least striking in the countries where the clergy have most power, such as Spain and Russia ; almost every advance of science has been persecuted by the Church, or, when that became impossible, denounced and discouraged ; torture and slavery were tolerated for ages, and the movements for their abolition were not mainly religious in origin.

The Mohammedan sphere includes western Asia, northern Africa, and a little of eastern Europe. It is a remarkable testimony to the penetrating influence of this religion that it is possible to speak of Mohammedans as a unity. They are one in a sense in which Christendom is not. Islam provides the secular as well as the religious law of the lands in which it prevails, and creates a community of customs as well as of faith. Mohammedan nations are generally marked by a strong military spirit, accompanied by a disinclination for commerce and an indifference to material prosperity. Slavery and polygamy are common. The patriarchal family system found in India and China is not more characteristic of Mohammedan than of European life, though it may occur here and there. The political system nearly always consists of a democracy beneath a despotism which allows surprisingly free play to individual careers, although progressive movements rarely succeed unless aided from without. Art and literature exhibit a strong Arab influence, and show themselves in special and limited, but by no means unpleasing, forms. The power possessed by Mohammedanism of

converting and drilling semi-savage races, as still displayed in Africa, renders it a dangerous religion, particularly in view of its doctrine that the temporal and spiritual power ought to be united. It is at its best in India, where, under the double check of a Christian government and a large Hindu population, it is compelled to adopt a reasonable and liberal tone. It is remarkable that European nations have almost invariably refused to accept Mohammedanism, in spite of the great temptation to apostatize under Turkish rule.

The Hindu sphere comprises India and some countries to the east of it, but it is noticeable that, though Indian influence has spread as far as Japan, it has made no way at all towards the west, and has had hardly any effect in Europe. Like the Mohammedans, they are a deeply religious people, but the religion is of a far less aggressive type, and has left its mark on the world in virtue of its speculations and its art rather than its political conquests. Practically the whole of eastern Asia, which includes the majority of the civilized human race, has been influenced by either Hinduism or Buddhism, which is the export form of Hinduism. In India itself the most remarkable feature is the persistence and supremacy of the ancient priestly families known as Brahmans, who have succeeded in relegating the military and royal classes to a secondary place in popular esteem. India has hence played a comparatively small part in active politics, and has been constantly invaded, without thereby losing its idiosyncrasies, although the Mohammedans have adopted the Perso-Arabic culture. The Hindus as a whole have more aptitude for trade than for war, although, as might be expected in so

large an area, warlike races are not absent ; but their chief characteristic as a race is no doubt their keen intellectual activity and inclination towards religious and philosophical discussion, combined with considerable artistic gifts. Society is organized on the basis of the family, not of the individual—that is to say, the father or grandfather is recognized as head of an establishment composed of his descendants, who live under his rule and do not form separate homes of their own. This idea has not, however, influenced Indian political organizations.

The Chinese sphere, with which we are more specially here concerned, comprises China itself, Japan, Korea, and Indo-China, but does not extend to the Malay Archipelago. It is clear that in this sphere the unifying and dominating influence comes from China in political institutions, language, written signs (which are not alphabetical), and art. The general character of this region differs from the two last described in many ways. In the first place, the government is remarkably stable. The empire of China has existed in its present form for more than 2,000 years, and, neglecting the legendary beginnings of Japan, the House of the Mikado has certainly been about 1,400 years on the throne. This continuity and stability contrast remarkably with the ephemeral states and dynasties of India, which have rarely lasted more than a few generations ; nor have the Mohammedan Caliphates had long lives. Then one notices that the people of the Far East are neither aggressive nor fanatical. Until the last decade the Japanese remained restricted to their islands, and for the last 2,000 years the history of China is a record, not of expan-

sion, but of the repulse or success of various Tartar invasions. The basis of Chinese institutions is an excellent, sane, prosaic, moral philosophy, which has little in common with Mohammedan theocracy or the incoherent despotisms of India, offsprings of an indifference to political organization. In no country of the Far East is there a priesthood or religion which has developed political power. The predominant occupations of the people are industry and trade. Except in Japan, the profession of arms is held in scant esteem. Art and literature are well developed, but are, as in Europe, largely secular, whereas in the Mohammedan and Indian sphere they are primarily religious. The idea of the family as a unit is of great importance, and seems to lie at the root of the conception of the state. With this idea is closely connected the practice of ancestor worship, which may be said to be the real indigenous, though often disguised, religion of the Far East. Japan presents a good many special features, which will be considered shortly, but differs from China above all in its strong military spirit of a feudal type, which in some points resembles the institutions of mediæval Europe.

It will be plain from the above brief remarks that nations within the Chinese sphere do not share the peculiarities of Hindus or Mohammedans, and have, in fact, many of the same aptitudes and aspirations as Europeans, though the difference between them and us in material civilization and development is great. That difference the Japanese are in process of reducing, if they have not already annihilated it. Unfortunately, this convergence in ideals and in the externals of civilization does not make for peace

when these races come into contact with Europeans. The Chinese are not popular among foreigners, but are tolerated because they compete in so few ways. The Japanese emigrate less than the Chinese, but are extremely unpopular in the west of America, because they can compete with Europeans in almost all arts and trades, and excel them in many. Yet, in spite of this, there is clearly a great difference between the white and yellow races in a thousand superficial matters appertaining to habits and customs, and also some divergences in character and the fundamental constitution of society.

It is not easy to define what these are, and the differences which raise barriers between nations may often be slight. It does seem, however, that in China and Japan alike the spirit of individualism is far less developed than in Europe or America. A human being in the Far East is primarily a member of a family or of the state, and is less likely to assert his individual character than among us. Hence one may find incredible conservatism retaining abuses when reform would be easy, and sudden change sweeping away at the bidding of government what one might suppose to be precious heirlooms. In neither case do individualities play so strong a part as in European movements. It is curious how few records of commanding personalities there are in the history of the Far East, with the exception of the distant Confucius, who was one of the least self-assertive of men. Both native and European historians of China seem to think in terms of dynasties rather than of emperors, and India, though far inferior to China in political genius and stability, can show more political personalities of eminence.

This question of individuality concerns the moral and intellectual sides of life. On the material side the difference in the standard of comfort is marked. Both Japanese and Chinese can thrive on a paucity of food (in this like the Hindus) and an absence of comfort intolerable to Europeans, and this, if we consider them as rivals, is one of their most formidable qualities. No one who knows Russia well can doubt that the dissipation prevalent among Russian officers was one of the chief causes of her collapse in the late war.

Though China and Japan have much in common, and Japan's debt to China in the past is enormous, the two nations are unlike in many details, and are best treated separately. Let us take China first. It is the stock example of immobility and extreme conservatism. Confucius said, 'I am one who is fond of antiquity, and seeks knowledge there,' and century after century, millennium after millennium, his nation has followed him. All mankind have a tendency to believe in a golden age, and this belief, by the way, is a curious proof that the most widespread instincts and beliefs of humanity are not on that account true, for if anything in early history is certain, it is that there never was a golden age. But the idea is more firmly fixed in the Chinese mind than among other nations, and with less counterpoise in any idea of progress or of a Messiah. This can only be called limitation of outlook and, to a certain extent, wrongheadedness.

The explanation, no doubt, is to be largely sought in history. Confucius was rightly alarmed at the symptoms of disintegration which he detected in the feudal governments of his time, and preferred

the ancient system of rule, which was probably more compact. After his death the chronicles of his country have as a background a long struggle against invading tribes with varying success. The Han dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D. 214), under which China was a great state, was succeeded by a period of disunion, which ended in disruption, the Tartars ruling in the north and the Chinese in the south. Then came another glorious period of reconsolidation and extension under the T'ang dynasty, which was in many ways the most brilliant epoch in the intellectual and political life of China; but the law of rise and fall, expansion and contraction, which seems characteristic of Chinese history, acted again. Another period of dissension and division ensued, the empire being again divided between Chinese in the south and Tartars in the north, until the disorder was brought to an end by the Mongol conquest. The Mongol rule lasted less than a hundred years, and was succeeded by another efflorescence of patriotism and talent under the native dynasty known as Ming, which in its turn decayed and succumbed before a new body of invaders, the Manchus, who still rule the country.

In early times the Chinese were not averse to receiving foreign ideas; they accepted Buddhism, and with it much Indian art and literature, although Buddhism, with its doctrines of monasticism and metempsychosis, was most distasteful to their ideas of family life and of ancestor worship, and has always been opposed by devout Confucianists. But in the Middle Ages communication with India decreased, and there was no civilized country within reach. Nestorian Christians and Moham-

medans, indeed, appeared, and were received with toleration. But with this exception nothing good came from abroad. China gave her civilization to Korea, Annam, and Japan, but received no equivalent in return, and all the Kins, Kitans, Mongols, and Manchus who invaded the empire introduced no new elements of culture worth mention. Nay, time after time, when Chinese culture raised its head and flourished, there came a blow from abroad which threw it back. But the invaders recognized the superiority of the Chinese, for though they might obtain possession of the imperial throne, they adopted Chinese customs, and were lost in the great mass of the Chinese people. One cannot be altogether surprised if, after centuries of these invasions, the Chinese came to regard all foreigners as barbarians, who had nothing to teach but everything to learn by respectfully accepting Chinese principles and customs. And this estimate of the outer world with which they came in contact was perfectly true until the arrival of Europeans. It was not intelligent of them to fail to see the difference between Europeans and the Tartar hordes, but it must be remembered that until recently the strength of Europe displayed itself only in an occasional and fragmentary form, and that chiefly in a few seaports which were not the residence of the government or of any large proportion of the educated classes.

The geographical isolation of the Chinese has been so complete that their remarkable commercial genius failed to break it down. The empire was large enough to trade with itself. Yet in the fifteenth century, under the Ming dynasty, their fleets appear to have reached India and even the east coast of

Africa, and it may be that, if a Chinese dynasty had continued on the throne, they would have been better disposed towards communications with foreigners, for the Manchus were no doubt partly influenced by the fear that new ideas might disturb the minds of their subjects and lead to revolts. But there can be no doubt of the existence of the financial and commercial spirit. It is seen in all departments of life, in such curious details, for instance, as old people who take up their abode near a graveyard in order to spare the expense of a long funeral procession. The thrift and industry of the Chinese are beyond all praise, but mercantile methods and ideals have gone beyond their own province, and affect disadvantageously politics and morals. To this must be largely attributed the want of high ideals, of active benevolence, of interest in public affairs, and of patriotism. Confucius said that a man who is not in an office has nothing to do with the conduct of its affairs. Government and administration are regarded as simply a number of business concerns out of which those who handle them make a profit. Specially remarkable is the want of military spirit and of enthusiasm for military achievements. As pointed out below, a change of views in this respect is one of the most noticeable features of the last few years, but hitherto the military profession has been despised as unworthy of the attention of a sage or practical man of business. Something similar may be seen in the United States, or at any rate might have been seen, for there, too, there has been a revival of military sentiment. But seven or eight years ago I remember hearing an American, who held a high official

position, say that he regarded soldiering as a low-down, mean profession.

Though the Chinese do not take a patriotic interest in public affairs, employment in the government service is the career to which all aspire who can, and is combined in the popular imagination with literary distinction. The hero of the ordinary Chinese novel is a man who passes examinations and obtains government appointments. This somewhat tame ideal is firmly rooted in the popular mind, and the respect and study of literature is as great a characteristic of the nation as conservatism or the commercial spirit. To the former it is nearly akin, for hardly anything original has been produced by Chinese writers for many centuries. Still, it is something to be able to say of a nation that it is always accessible, if not to argument, at least to an apt quotation, and that is true of the Chinese since the time of Confucius. Chinese works are an exception to most Asiatic literature in not being mainly religious. Hardly any except Buddhist translations from the Sanskrit claim a definitely sacred character, and the majority are entirely secular. This gives them a freedom which the doctors of Arabic and Sanskrit never attained, but it is largely counterbalanced by an imitative conservatism, a want of creative boldness, and a disinclination for speculation.

How feeble is this last power in the Chinese mind may be seen from their philosophy. The earliest philosophers illustrated their ideas by certain diagrams composed of lines intended to represent such conceptions as the active and passive principles in nature, and even to this day Chinese philosophy has not been able to disentangle itself from these

diagrams as an integral part of science and metaphysics. Religion is similarly entangled with animistic and cosmological ideas, and, except in as far as it is found in translations of Indian Buddhist works, hardly exists in a form worthy of the name, for it is represented either by gross superstitions mainly connected with funeral rites, or by excellent moral treatises in which religious feeling, properly so called, is absent. Moral and political philosophy is, indeed, the department of literature in which the Chinese specially excel. The utterances of their writers on such matters often sound like platitudes when translated, but if one considers the period at which they were undoubtedly composed one can only admire their soundness and originality. The theories of Mencius (372 to 289 B.C.) are peculiarly interesting. He lays down distinctly that the people are the principal part of the state, and that religion and the Emperor are merely departments of government.

The poverty of Chinese religious ideas is reflected in their art, for the greatest manifestations of art are intimately connected with religion. The art of Europe is not commonly thought of as mainly religious, yet if all the temples, cathedrals, and religious pictures were taken away, what a gap would be left. In Chinese architecture there is little of the sublime or grandiose, and the habit of building mainly in wood encourages the picturesque and useful rather than the imposing. But of such buildings there is a multitude, and the level of taste and talent in the smaller arts—in bronze, porcelain, carving, lacquer, enamels, and textiles—is high. In painting, if we miss the highest inspiration,

beauty of line and delicacy of colour are conspicuous, and in Chinese calligraphy, the derivative of painting, art is extended to writing more completely than in any other system.

One might have expected a people with so positive and practical a spirit to make greater progress in science. They were the authors of many remarkable inventions, such as printing and the compass, but they did little in the way of developing their own discoveries, partly from their natural conservatism, and partly, it must be said in their excuse, owing to the unceasing task of repelling barbarian invasions, only varied by submission to them. But no doubt Chinese science, philosophy, and religion do all reveal one great weakness in the national mind—namely, its extraordinary superstition and negligence of facts. It is true that in many matters, such as medicine and the physical sciences generally, China is merely in the same condition as medieval Europe; but still medieval Europe does not give any example of superstition quite so gross, systematic, and widespread as the Chinese Fêng-Shui, the science of lucky and unlucky sites, and of the good and bad influences in the earth which affect both the houses of the living and the graves of the dead. This branch of imaginary knowledge has its professors, text-books, rules, and instruments, and is taken as seriously as surveying is in Europe. The Chinese mind is prone to theorizing and systematizing, but only up to a certain point. The theories and systems are rarely thorough and complete, and still more rarely checked by any reference to facts. Self-conceit, respect for antiquity, a long course of purely literary education, administered through centuries to

successive generations, a fondness for ceremony, for symbolism, and expedients for 'saving face,' together with a disinclination for either higher speculative flights or a minute examination of facts, have made the Chinese, although a practical, energetic, commercial people, less receptive of science and material progress than many intellectually inferior races.

I am conscious that, in indicating some sides of the Chinese character, I have emphasized chiefly the bad sides. This is far from being the result of any prejudice against the Chinese, but rather of a feeling that the point about them which requires explanation is why they have not cut a greater figure in the world. In numbers they exceed every other race, even if we reckon all Europeans together as a unit, and their physique is excellent; they can live anywhere, and certain sections of them are disposed to emigrate; they are civilized, laborious, and excellent men of business. Why, then, have so large and gifted a people not conquered the world? The answer must be found in their mental defects, and perhaps, to some extent, in their virtues, for though in practice modern international ethics assume the contrary, attention to one's own business and an unaggressive spirit are not faults.

The question of greatest interest presented by the Chinese at this moment is the extent of their power to change and reform their ways. The example of Japan, though it may not be strictly legitimate to argue from it, prepares one for a power of transformation which might otherwise seem improbable in so conservative a country, and it is well known that when Conservatives do change they make the

most violent Radicals. There can, I think, be no doubt of the reality of the impression made on the Chinese by the events of the last decade. Enormous as are their self-complacency and their indifference to obvious facts, it has been forced upon their attention that Europeans are their undoubted superiors in material strength, and that they have not at present the knowledge and organization necessary to resist attack. The danger of attack is equally clear. What practical fruit in the way of change and reform will these disagreeable considerations produce ?

There is no precise parallel in history to aid one in making a guess, for no other country has had the same length of national life. The modern Greeks, Italians, and Egyptians are not reproductions of the ancient states which bore the same names, and the Japanese are a relatively modern people. The Chinese offer the unique spectacle of a state which has a continuous and authentic history of about 3,000 years, and has apparently become senile. Can states or individuals rejuvenate themselves ? Does anyone have a second innings ? In favour of the Chinese one may say that national decay is generally accompanied by national disappearance ; the race becomes mixed, and the native element loses its distinctive character. But there is no sign of that in China. The race is as numerous, vigorous, and tenacious of its peculiarities as ever, neither has it been worn out by any particular exertions in the last few centuries. An inspection of its long history suggests that the nation is not immovable, but alternates between periods of activity and quiescence, the latter generally accom-

panied by the rule of foreigners. If the race is not effete, it would be quite in harmony with its record in the past if the decay of the Manchu dynasty coincided with a national Chinese revival. Also, it is a hopeful sign that the will, ambition, and ideals of the Chinese all tend to lead them in the path of progress. They are retarded by their methods, but unlike the Turks, who have few ideals in common with Europeans, they have much the same views about national prosperity as we have, and the sentiments of either race on these subjects might serve as headings for the copybooks of the other. No country in Europe has a greater passion for education, only the education imparted is almost useless. The black side of the picture is the disorganization of the government, and the difficulty of finding any machinery which can act upon the country as a whole. Also, Chinese conceit has not lost its power for evil merely because the nation admit that they have something to learn from Europeans. There is still the danger that they may think they can learn it very easily, and not take sufficient pains with the lesson.

The features common to China and Japan are more important than the points of difference, yet the two countries offer obvious contrasts, particularly when one comes to definitions and descriptions. China is large, various, and vague; it is hard to delineate the national character, to state precisely the influences which have produced it, or to say anything which is really true of the whole country. On the other hand, it is exceedingly easy to say things about Japan which are at least plausible. The country is small, and presents a manageable

panorama to the historian and traveller ; its rulers have always kept it singularly well in hand ; it has generally done and known what the government of the time wished it to do and know.

The circumstances and history of Japan are so different from those of other Asiatic states that they prepare one for a different result. They do not, perhaps, entirely explain the special eminence which the country has attained, but they do make the divergence of its development from the ordinary Asiatic norm perfectly natural. In the first place, the empire is entirely comprised in a group of islands in the temperate zone. This made it practically safe from those barbarian invasions which battered the strength and mixed the races of most Asiatic lands. The wave of Mohammedan conquest stopped further south ; Christian interference in the sixteenth century was checked and controlled. The only serious invasion, that of the Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khan, at the end of the thirteenth century, was repulsed. The people were warlike, and, left thus to themselves, developed a system of feudalism and chivalry rare, if not unique, in Asia. Civil strife is a great evil, but at least it tends to produce a more humane and generous style of combat than the wars of race and religion which have decimated the continent of Asia, for in such contests each party thought the other hardly human. Also, no one could force on the Japanese an alien system of morals, manners, or religion. Secure on their islands, they borrowed what pleased them and no more. Their debt to China is immense, and if we wonder that China lags so far behind Japan to-day, we may also reflect that the institutions, art,

literature, religion, and even language of Japan would offer a very meagre spectacle if all that is borrowed from China were deducted. But, combined with this power of borrowing, the Japanese have also a genius for adaptation. Critics sometimes reproach them with being imitative, but this reproach forgets that there is no such thing as absolute originality. The inhabitants of the British islands, for instance, did not invent the Christian religion, or the Roman alphabet, or the forms of art which they pursue with most success, any more than the Japanese invented what corresponds to these things in Japan; but few European nations have had so great a talent for infusing their own special individuality into what they borrowed without spoiling it.

In the moral sphere there is one special difference between the Chinese and Japanese. Whereas the former give the first place to filial piety in the literal sense, the Japanese lay more stress on the obligation of loyalty to a feudal superior, and ultimately to the sovereign. As the feudal system has now been abolished, only loyalty to the throne and patriotism remain. Patriotism is, like feudalism, a rare emotion and motive in Asia. The willingness for self-sacrifice is indeed frequent, but it is more commonly associated with religious movements than with love for any one region. This loyalty preserved the House of the Mikado from the dawn of Japanese history till the present day, in spite of the grave danger which continually threatened it from ambitious nobles. One aristocratic clan after another seized the royal power *de facto*, but contented themselves with the title of



RECUMBENT STATUE OF BUDDHA.

Shogun, and did not dethrone the imperial family. In China, on the other hand, in spite of the respect professed for the imperial power, the dynasty has been frequently changed, and rebellion has been constant. With feudalism and loyalty was combined, not unnaturally, a strong genius for discipline and training. The Chinese love of instruction was transferred from literature to practical things, and the Japanese youth was put through an excellent course of moral discipline, in which the austere science of when a man of honour had to perform suicide, and how he should do it, formed an item. Yet there was not, as is so often the case in Asia, any personality, book, or priesthood which cramped the national mind. Shintoism was vague and easy-going, Buddhism and Confucianism were both imported systems. Therefore, though the Japanese were by no means lacking in national pride, and as ready as the Chinese to believe themselves self-sufficient, there was not the same mass of codified prejudice and obstruction to be overcome. In the middle of the nineteenth century the people were wearying of the policy of seclusion, and when the government determined to reverse that policy they met with some opposition among interested political parties, but with none in the great mass of national feeling.

European estimates of the Japanese character and achievements generally reveal a covert background of jealousy, and even when they are favourable describe the Far Eastern mind as inscrutable and unfathomable. There is, I think, exaggeration in all this. In one sense it is true that every nation is a riddle to the others, and it has even been held that

men never really understand women. The Japanese character combines loyalty with versatility in a juxtaposition which is unusual, but not inexplicable, but otherwise it seems to me that most of the oddities which it, like all varieties of human nature, offers may be paralleled in Europe. In social life there is no doubt a great difference of customs, which shows no tendency to diminish, for Japanese women, after having tentatively essayed European ways, seem disposed to retreat again within the bounds fixed for them by native custom, which means that family life becomes a much more intimate affair than in the west, and less exposed to cosmopolitan influences. But be it observed that, though the Japanese woman does not seem inclined to give herself the full measure of western licence, her position is not like that of the inmates of a harem or zenana. She follows a *via media*, and is by no means secluded.

Seeing that the Japanese are an extremely polite and amiable people, who have given constant practical proofs of their admiration for Europe, it seems strange that Europeans should not like them better. Yet the fact is, I think, undoubted. In the Far East one generally hears the Chinese praised at the expense of the Japanese. It is clearly significant that the Power which has concluded an alliance with Japan is also the Power which is furthest distant, and one wonders how many of the excellent Britons who during the late war took a sporting interest in the 'brave little Japs' would really like closer dealings with them. The aversion felt for them by the Russians and Californians is no doubt mainly political; they are an unexpected obstacle to various schemes, and it is annoying to be beaten

by outsiders at what one had thought one's own game. But at least two special grounds of irritation are commonly mentioned by Europeans who have to do with Japanese. One is their dishonesty in trade. The testimony to this is so strong that it can hardly be doubted. It appears that Japanese firms are not only wanting in integrity, but that they will inflict great damage on those who do business with them for the sake of a very small gain to themselves, and with a total blindness to the value of commercial reputation which they lose by breaking faith ; further, that the quality of the goods they supply is not constant, and tends to deteriorate. The explanation no doubt is that they were till lately a feudal people, whose ideas of honour were exclusively military. The merchant did not enjoy the same consideration and was not bound by the same code as the soldier. In China, on the other hand, a nation of merchants, the value of commercial honour is recognized and its standard maintained, whereas large parts of the army were until recently a mob of rascallions.

Another point which undoubtedly annoys Europeans in Japan is the behaviour of inferiors. There is no lack of politeness ; in no country are bows, smiles, and courteous phrases so superabundant. But Japanese servants and tradesmen insist on thinking for themselves, and are wanting in that grave unquestioning deference, generally characteristic of orientals, which executes the most unreasonable orders without hesitation or a smile. Disobedience in Japan is clearly only superficial—her generals and rulers are conspicuously successful in securing the execution of their orders—but it is nevertheless

tiresome in small matters. A waiter asks you if you will have tea or coffee, and you say tea quite distinctly. But the waiter is a philosopher in his way, and has formed a theory that foreigners habitually drink coffee. He therefore brings you coffee. 'But I ordered tea.' 'You will like this coffee very much,' he blandly observes; and to get the tea the traveller will have to use great insistence, and to provoke an expression on the waiter's face which seems to say, 'What an oddly bred person you are! You know that coffee is what you really want.' Similarly I once told a jinricksha man to take me to a railway-station in Tokyo along certain streets which I wanted to see. He went straight to the station without passing through one of them, assuming that I merely wished to reach the destination named, and that my description of the route to be followed was a feeble foreign attempt to teach him the way which he knew much better.

Of all human judgments, those passed by one nation on another are probably the most fallacious. They are generally based on defective knowledge, and at best on some particulars placed in unduly prominent relief. How often we laugh at some Far Eastern custom, or, rather, at the phrase in which it is described, forgetting that we do substantially the same thing ourselves! The Chinese system of posthumous honours, of promoting and ennobling ancestors after their death, makes the reader smile philosophically at the odd ways of distant and backward races. Yet the *London Gazette* of January 15, 1907, contained a notice from the War Office stating that the King had been graciously pleased to approve of the Victoria Cross being delivered to the representa-

tives of those who fell in the performance of acts of valour, and who would have been recommended to her late Majesty for the said decoration had they survived. Does this differ much from the Chinese system of conferring honours on the dead ?

The Japanese criticism of England is curious. They say that we are dirty, lazy, and superstitious. The charge of dirtiness is based on our failure to take a daily hot bath after the Japanese custom, but the many worthy muscular Christians who take a cold tub every morning will resent this heathen insult. The point in dispute is an excellent instance of how different races may regard the same matter differently, and each consider themselves innocent and the other guilty of the same offence. We think the Japanese wanting in cleanliness because, though they boil themselves daily, they use one after another the same water.

One reason for thinking us lazy is what appears to the Japanese the excessive number of our holidays. If one adds together all the Sundays of the year and all the Saturday afternoons, with a good sprinkling of Thursday afternoons in many places, and such miscellaneous supplements as Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide festivities, and bank holidays, it will be seen that work ceases during about a quarter of the whole year. Japanese labour is less discontinuous, for though Sunday is, in imitation of Europe, observed to some extent as a day of recreation, it is not a day when all shops are closed and business comes to a standstill. Besides, a Japanese will frequently work fifteen hours a day without thinking that he has done anything wonderful, and a London cab-driver would recoil in alarm

from the labours of a jinricksha man. Yet Europeans constantly repeat that Chinese and Japanese have no sense of the value of time. There I believe we are wrong, or rather I believe we are wrong in supposing that our own sense of this value is superior. Until the last few years I have lived mainly in the East, with the result that England had become to me largely a foreign land. When I took up my residence in these islands I imagined that I should find business transacted with an accuracy and rapidity to which I was not accustomed. But I found exactly the reverse. It certainly takes longer to furnish a house, bind books, or have a piano tuned in Yorkshire than it does in Turkey or Zanzibar. In Japan last summer native workmen made me a coat and a pair of boots in miraculously few hours, but I lost nearly a fortnight because no European firm in Shanghai or Tientsin could say what steamers were leaving for Japan from any port but their own. The reiterated assurances that there were steamers nearly every day proved quite false, and no attempt had been made to tabulate in one statement the movements of the various lines.

It is curious that the Japanese should think us superstitious, for to most people it will seem that there is less religion or superstition in Europe than in Asia. But Japanese visitors have no doubt been impressed by the regularity and dullness of Sunday worship. A Japanese may frequent temples in connection with funeral rites, or on festival days, or during a pilgrimage, all of which occasions are apt to assume something of the nature of a picnic; but the most pious would never dream of attending morning and evening service, nor would they, as a

rule, find anyone to perform it for them, for in most Buddhist temples the priests are content with a single service celebrated about 5 a.m.

What future are we to predict for the Japanese? They are not an aggressive people. Their reserve and moderation in international matters deserve the highest praise, and there is probably no other nation which would have kept its head so well after the success of the Russian war. But though their character is compounded with so large a dose of sanity and moderation, of Greek *σωφροσύνη*, yet they will hardly be able to withstand the pressure of the many influences, geographical, social, political, military, and commercial, which urge them towards expansion. For this purpose they must, I think, be considered in connection with China, for the two peoples have so much in common in their nature as well as in their interests that political differences are hardly likely to dissociate them permanently.

It is strange that the Chinese, though less pliant and assimilative than the Japanese, are more ready to emigrate. The trade of eastern tropical Asia—that is to say, of Burma, Siam, the Malay States, French Indo-China, Java, the Philippines, and other islands—is mainly in the hands of Chinese colonists, and in some towns, such as Bangkok and Singapore, they are as conspicuous an element in the population as the natives. They are numbered by tens of thousands in Eastern Siberia, Australia, and the western regions of North and South America. These emigrants are drawn almost exclusively from the two provinces of Kwang-Tung and Fu-Kien, in the extreme south of China; but as all the conditions of the age, notably the increase in facility of com-

munication both within and outside the empire, tend to encourage emigration, it is probable that other provinces will contribute their quota in the future. Though the Japanese show less taste for residence abroad, yet they penetrate to Hawaii and California, and they show an inclination to extend and consolidate their commercial influence over the Pacific region, particularly in those parts where the way is in some measure prepared for them by the existence of Chinese colonies. There is no sign yet that either their own ambition or the force of circumstances will carry either race in the direction of Europe. But that the Chinese and Japanese are destined to become one of the dominant Powers in the Pacific, and to dispute the first place with whatever European and American competitors they may find, seems to me obvious.

I would not call this 'the yellow peril,' for I do not myself feel the danger. European civilization is not, to my mind, so perfect that any alteration or amalgamation with other schemes of life would degrade it, or that humanity would be a loser if it does not become paramount in all parts of the globe. No one possesses the necessary impartiality and cosmopolitan outlook to be able to decide whether the Asiatic or the European character is, as a whole, the better. It is, however, perhaps just to say that the greatest achievements of Europeans in art and literature are superior to the greatest achievements of Asiatics in the same spheres, but, then, these achievements are far from being a general characteristic of Europeans. The productive periods are few, widely scattered in time, and confined to few countries. On the other hand, the evils and ugliness of modern European civilization are as obvious as its advantages, and

there is no clearer proof of them than the fascination which the East exercises upon nearly all who come under its spell. The extension of European influence does not mean the distribution over other continents of the beauty and genius of Europe, but merely of the most commonplace aspects of European life and industry. To those who are occupied with the task of organizing new cities and states colonial life may seem the most interesting in the world—and I have felt the passion myself in East Africa—but for those who do not share in this creative joy, and look simply at the results, it must be confessed that America, particularly western America, and the British colonies have added very little to the art, literature, interest, variety, and pleasure of humanity; nor do I see why it should be considered a calamity if European influence does not become everywhere predominant, or even has to recede in certain spheres. Variety must be for the intellectual and pictorial advantage of mankind as long as the various types are not destructive or evil in themselves. I should be sorry to see the strength and extent of Mohammedanism increased, for it is an intolerant and destructive religion, which with difficulty frees itself from such evils as slavery. Yet much will be lost to the world—nay, is being lost—with the gradual disappearance of Mohammedan states. But Far Eastern, and specially Japanese, civilization can be reproached with no particular evil, and it brings with it a picturesqueness, cheerfulness, and courtesy which must be recognized as good elements. Its fault is not aggressiveness, but rather a too great willingness to learn, which makes it ready to abandon its own good points.

I

THE RELIGIOUS EAST

ON my way to China and Japan I paid a brief visit to India. It was twenty years since I had been there, and the increase in European influence was very noticeable. Then no one could travel even on the main lines of railway without his own servant and provisions. Accommodation was uncertain, and most people looked to private friends to provide it. The babel of languages was a practical difficulty even to those who knew Hindustani. Now one can travel alone in most parts as easily as in Europe, and be fairly sure of finding native officials who speak English, and some kind of food and lodging. All this implies an increased acquaintance with Europeans and their ways.

One is struck, too, by the spread of education, and by the prevalence of European ideas and procedure in native politics. As far as results go, these congresses and patriotic movements have not, perhaps, much to show; but the significant point is that such things would not have entered into anybody's head a few decades ago, whereas they seem quite natural now. The change, though immensely important, is perhaps, quantitatively, not very great—hardly greater than the change which has been

wrought in Europe during the same time by the intrusion into Western politics of Eastern questions, which have acquired an interest and proximity demanding of public men an acquaintance with things Asiatic that would have astonished our fathers. In India, despite the eloquence of the Bengalis, I think it is specially among the Moham-medans that the new spirit is noticeable, for any change in the rigidity of Islam attracts attention. They are an influential and formerly ruling minority, jealous of the Hindus, and naturally inclined to support the British Government and strengthen their own position by every means in their power. Such institutions as the college at Aligarh are trying to solve the old problem of how to combine Islam with a moderately tolerant and liberal spirit. The combination has rarely been made in any independent Moslem state, but may present less difficulty when those who administer the government profess another religion. For instance, the Tartars of the Russian Empire are peaceful, teachable folk, but they have lost their energy as well as their fanaticism. Islam is based on the union of the temporal and spiritual power, of the secular and religious life. When it possesses temporal power it is usually vigorous, but intolerant and unprogressive, as, indeed, its principles logically force it to be, for the teaching of Mohammed was definite and detailed, and, for the theologian, hardly susceptible of variation or liberal interpretation, since the whole code is expressly declared to be a revelation from the Almighty. But when the Mohammedan Church loses temporal power, it is apt to become insignificant. One feels then that the intellectual and spiritual elements in

its composition are poor and scanty ; that its strength resides in fanaticism, and the power to enlist the fighting instincts in the service of religion ; and that when it has to act merely as a moral force, as it must in any civilized non-Mohammedan State, and as Buddhism and Christianity habitually act, its influence is small. I find it hard to believe that Mohammedanism, in as far as it can be separated from warlike Mohammedans, will have much effect on the world in the future.

The victory of Japan over Russia has no doubt produced an impression in India. It does not act, as many seem to think, as an incentive to revolt, but it has made all Asia see that Europeans are neither inimitable nor invincible. Hitherto there has been a widespread inarticulate feeling, founded partly on fear and partly on contempt, that Europeans are ridiculous in their habits, but have at their command some mysterious magic which other nations cannot master, and that hence it is best to submit and go one's own way. But now the spell is broken. The most aggressive and most dreaded of European Powers has been defeated by Japan, and the advantage of adapting European methods to the service of Asiatic interests has become obvious. No sudden or startling revolution may occur, but in time this lesson will do more to change Asia than all our missionary and educational work.

Still, the features that alter both in individuals and nations are habits and methods rather than character, and there is no sign that the Hindus will become other than they have been for ages, or turn into what we call practical people.

India is the land of gods. In no other country of the

world is religion so universal, so various in its manifestations, so penetrating in its influence. India produced and strangled Buddhism, has admitted Mohammedanism, and fostered countless little sects, but its natural and native faith is Hinduism—that vast growth which no savant can define, and no reformer has ever been able to compass and systematize.

Profoundly antagonistic as are Hinduism and Mohammedanism in most things, they agree in taking a religious view of life—that is to say, in literally subordinating the obvious interests and advantages of everyday existence to something beyond, and to the law which it prescribes. There are many religious people in Europe, but comparatively few of them sincerely wish to subordinate this world to the next, or the state to the Church, and those few have never been able to have their way. The ordinary devout European thinks of religion, not as the substratum which gives to the world whatever reality and importance it has, but as something to help him through the troubles of life—a department of government on a par with the law and education. If liberally minded, he is apt to say that the best religion is the one which does most good in the world; if a sectarian, he will argue that his own religion does most good, and therefore is the best. This reasoning appeals also to the Chinese and Japanese. Mencius said expressly that the people are the most important element in a nation, and that the deities of the land come second; but it is mere unintelligible profanity to Hindu and Mohammedan alike. For both of these religion is not a branch of morals or administration, but the all-embracing whole, of which politics are a very subsidiary part.

In one sense Mohammedanism cannot be called a great religion ; spiritually, intellectually, and morally, its deficiencies are glaring. It has conquered a great part of the world by not aiming too high, and by appealing to the more barbaric virtues. It encourages war, the slave-trade, and many other abuses. But although it does not check and bridle the natural violence of semi-civilized man as thoroughly as better creeds attempt to do, yet it does succeed in imposing its own somewhat imperfect code with unparalleled success and completeness. It controls both the state as a whole and individual citizens ; the religious law is also the civil law of the land, and the percentage of the population who obey the precepts of the Prophet in such uncomfortable matters as praying five times a day and abstaining from alcoholic drinks is far larger than that which in Christian countries keeps the more inconvenient commandments.

The Mussulman is, as a rule, proud of his faith, and regards himself as superior to others merely because he belongs to it. Its unifying power gives a certain resemblance to the lands of Islam all the world over. They have much that is common in art and literature, though communications are bad and do not favour international relations. Most Mussulmans in Turkey seem to belong to the same people, and so do most Mussulmans in India, though in reality many and diverse races have combined to fill the fold of true believers in either country. Newspapers at the present time often speak of the Mohammedan *races* of India claiming the same rights as the Hindu *races*. Scientifically the expression is not exact, but it is not so wrong as it seems ; for the use of a common language and common customs does separate the

Moslem from the Hindu, and creates a difference which is superficially as striking as racial distinction.

Hinduism is perhaps not so obviously a great influence as Mohammedanism. It is less militant, less missionary, less definite: extraordinarily various, plastic, and versatile. It provides a congenial religion for every class except, perhaps, soldiers, in spite of having a god of war and some military adherents. It does not flourish very well out of India and its neighbourhood, but there it seems to be in the blood and bones of the people, even more than Islam among its own followers. If one observes attentively Hindu ceremonies, one is struck with their unobtrusive, intimate character. Sacred fairs and processions there may be now and then, but though the temples and bathing-places are thronged with worshippers, it is comparatively rare to see anything that seems to a European like a religious service. A group may be sitting round a priest listening to the reading of some sacred poem, but they appear to be pursuing their pleasure and edification rather than performing a ceremony. All the observances seem private, individual, and mysterious. There is an immense difference between the prayers with which Mohammedans begin the day, ranged in lines like troops, and led by their commanding officer, and the morning ablutions of the Hindu. The Ghats at Benares are crowded with bathers in the hours which follow on sunrise, yet it requires close observation to see that they are performing a religious rite, and not merely taking a somewhat leisurely tub. The Hindu's religion is so much a part of him that it becomes, not only to the priest or devotee, but to the

ordinary man, as natural a part of his daily life as eating or putting on his clothes, and much more important. In his own quiet way, he is continually recognizing the presence of the gods, and he sacrifices to them in his home as much as in the temples.

Nothing shows the reality of Hindu religion more than the fact that people will come from distant parts of India to die in Benares, and deliberately breathe their last lying on the bank of the sacred stream just where the extreme ripple washes the riverside mud. Missionaries inveigh against the cruelty of the creed which can recommend such a practice, and the heartlessness of the relatives who aid and abet it. But the Hindu is simply showing that he has that faith in the life of the world to come which the missionary preaches, but often lacks. A well-to-do religious person in Europe, and equally in China and Japan, dies as comfortably as he can in bed, thinking of his property and his medicine, and committing his future to the care of a Saviour, Amida or other. But people do not delegate their primary interests in this way; no well-to-do person leaves his business and property in the hands of Amida, but merely his future existence, as to which he cares just enough to be easily reassured about it. But the Hindu is emotionally and philosophically convinced that his existence after death will depend largely on the way he spends the last part of his life. Therefore, as soon as he feels himself growing elderly, he retires from business, devotes himself to the things of the other world, and if his piety is fervent or his conscience will not be quieted, he dies in the mud of the Ganges as uncomplainingly as a patient

takes mud baths to cure a disease. For such a man religion is clearly the primary interest.

Just as religious observances permeate the whole life of a Hindu, so does Hinduism include the whole panorama of human life. It is unlike Mohammedanism, which selects, drills, blesses, damns, and regards most things as either very good or very bad, those words being used in a somewhat special and theological sense. But though Hinduism can produce codes, rituals, and catechisms by the score for those who want them, yet its spirit and operations are very wide and Catholic, as the multitude and discord of the above-mentioned systems show. At first one is impressed by the simplicity and purity of Mohammedan mosques—the marble, the mosaic, the graceful Arabic inscriptions, the sharp, clear-cut minarets, no inapt ornament for the religion of the sword. And in comparison the Hindu temple, with its many towers and pinnacles all covered with figures, its sacred bulls and sacred apes that wander undisturbed, its floor swimming with libations or, if it be a shrine of Kali, with blood, seems a dubious and unclean pantheon, if not a pandemonium. It is equally difficult at first sight to believe that the almost wholly naked ministers of these temples are men of education. I remember seeing a man in a temple of Kali who wore nothing but a loin-cloth, and was occupied in beheading sacrificial goats—not an intellectual or spiritual calling even in Hindu estimation. Yet he had a perfect command of English, and spoke sympathetically of Balliol.

I know not to what to compare the exterior of these shrines: perhaps to some huge microscope or

telescope with more than the normal complement of lenses, mirrors, and wheels. And that is partly the meaning of a Hindu temple : a place where people meditate and examine their own souls and worlds afar, past, present, and to come. It does not suggest the godly discipline of the Mohammedan or even of the Buddhist ; but if one lingers sympathetically in its courtyards, its stones will be found to preach as much philosophy as superstition : the Indian theory of the impermanence and changefulness of all universes, of the insignificance of this present span, of the need of fixing the eyes elsewhere. The symbols of birth and death stand on the walls, with no reticence about the origin of life or the certainty of dissolution. The pyramids of stone are teeming with a monstrous brood of bas-reliefs and statues, as pools teem with plants and insects. The demoniac effigies of the destroying powers, with many mouths, arms, and weapons, are ready to slay and devour this pullulating life. All say that death is merely a passage to a new life, and life merely an offering presented to death ; that hopes of permanence in heaven, or anywhere save in union with the divine spirit, are little less foolish than terrestrial ambitions.

The finest temples of India are in the south. Here the Mohammedans have done comparatively little destruction, and the Dravidians, though not, perhaps, more artistic than the pure-blooded Hindus, have a greater talent for grandiose and, some might think, monstrous architecture. Their genius revels in bulk and multitude ; the towers and gateways without, the carved halls and colonnades within, surpass in size and profusion of sculpture the holy places of Benares. But plan and proportion

are somewhat missing ; one sees the vigour and variety, but not the object or the scheme.

One of the greatest of these temples is at Madura, on the line from Madras to Tuticorin. Its huge pyramidal gateways, covered from base to pinnacle with gigantic figures, stand up like rocks among the palm-trees round it, and at night some of its gates are illuminated with countless lamps. It shows none of that decrepitude which so often marks religious buildings in the East. Crowds frequent it for prayer or business, for, as at Jerusalem, the merchants and money-changers have their stalls in the corridors, and sell sacred objects, idols, and rosaries (often made in Birmingham), and all manner of substances to be used as offerings. The more holy parts, where are situated the shrines of Siva and the goddess Minakshi, are inaccessible except to the elect, but acres of dim halls and colonnades, where a thousand images testify to the omnipresence and metamorphoses of the Destroyer and Reproducer, are open to all the world, including Europeans and sacred cows, though I perhaps insult these holy creatures by coupling their name with the impure infidels who eat them. In one corner may be seen a school where a Brahman is teaching a score of urchins ; in another men are weaving the cotton threads—apparently simple, but really very intricate—which Brahmans wear over their shoulder as a sign that they are twice born. In another part are sacred stables, where are kept effigies in cardboard or metal of mythical animals on which Siva and Minakshi sometimes take a ride when they are carried in procession. Suddenly one comes out of these dark, mysterious habitations to a tank surrounded by a colonnade. Historical and legendary

scenes are painted on the walls, among them a representation of how some pious monarch of old impaled the Jains in his kingdom and extirpated their sect. With horrible fidelity, the artist has represented how the dogs lick up the blood of the impaled but still living heretics and the birds pick out their eyes.

In the evening I went to witness a procession which, it was announced, would conduct the goddess Minakshi from the inner shrine through the outer temple, and display her to the faithful. There seemed to be a reluctance to fix the goddess's movements by anything so unhallowed as European time; she would issue, it was understood, when the moon was in an auspicious position. Therefore, fearing I might be late, I went at nine, and had to wait till eleven, but found an expectant crowd already collected. The halls and corridors of the temple, which were sombre in the day, were pitch dark at night; hardly did a lamp here and there indicate cavernous depths beyond, guarded by monstrous deities. The crowd seemed immense; it heaved and swayed in the darkness, calling upon the goddess to come, but she came not, being influenced only by the moon, and not by human wishes. Great bats flew under the arches overhead, and the sacred cows and elephants that pushed their way through the people seemed in that haunted obscurity swollen to the proportions of Leviathan.

All waiting, however long, must have an end, and at last the great event begins. From the innermost penetralia sound the reverberations of a drum terrifying in this blackness and nervous tension. So might the first notes at a human sacrifice sound in the

ears of the victims. Gates are thrown open, and a wandering light is seen far, far off on the walls of distant arcades. It is the reflection of something luminous advancing. The drums redouble, and are answered by shrill blasts of flutes ; but the music is drowned by the roar that bursts from the crowd and re-echoes like thunder through the dark halls as the procession comes into view, leaping and quivering down the corridors—a mob of men, young and old, naked except for loin-cloths and the threads hung round their shoulders, pressing in disorderly enthusiasm round a palanquin that seems half like a boat and half like a bird with beak in front and outstretched wings at the side. But both the vehicle and the mysterious object reclining in it are so covered with garlands, jewellery, and cloth of gold that it is impossible to say what their shape may be. Dancing-girls and musicians precede the glittering mass and round it are burnt incense that smoulders in heavy wreaths of smoke, and camphor that blazes in sheets of flame. The glare lights up the colonnades with a wild brilliancy ; the bats fly away, and the elephants and cows seem disturbed, but the human crowd press round the palanquin as near as the guardians permit, with hands raised to their foreheads or stretched out in prayer, and voices joining in some psalm of welcome. There is no doubt of the glad and reverent affection of these thousands of worshippers. No sovereign could wish for a better reception than that accorded to the thing in the palanquin—but what on earth is it ? If one could see it without its wraps, it would be a little brass doll, but as it lies among its garlands and jewels it is, even in the vivid blaze of the camphor, too indistinct to seem grotesque

or incongruous, and it is what the emotion of the crowd makes it—something borne from another world in this mysterious hour of the moon, unhuman, yet symbolizing human life and passion, and receiving with a distant benevolence the reverence and affection lavished on it. What the crowd are worshipping is not the work of their own hands, but the work of their own minds, and they rejoice because they believe they are in contact with a portion of the universal spirit specially embodied in this image.

I have dwelt on these aspects of Hinduism and Mohammedanism because it seems to me that such scenes illustrate the difference between the extreme and middle East. In characterizing nations, no absolute statements should be made. But we have the words of Confucius taught in every Chinese school: 'To devote oneself earnestly to one's duties towards man, and while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom.' That is not the wisdom of Madura. There are fanatical sects in China and Japan, but religious enthusiasm is no more prevalent in those countries than in England. Their literature and art are largely secular; one great part of their indigenous religions is composed of public morality imperfectly demarcated from political economy, and another great part consists of divination and other gross superstitions which are an insanity of the practical instincts as much as a corruption of religion. It is most interesting to see that China is the only oriental country which has succeeded in bringing Mohammedanism to reason, and in forcing it to accept the position of a creed with no privileges beyond other creeds. This

has been done more thoroughly than under Great Britain in India, for there the Mohammedans are still an obviously distinct though not dominant class ; but in China the 20,000,000 Mohammedans are for the most part distinguished from the rest of the population by little except abstinence from pork, which is the staple meat diet of other Chinese.

II

COCHIN CHINA

EVER since I was a boy and read about Further India in old geography books, the south-eastern corner of Asia has had a special fascination for me. It is full of the most varied associations, some homely, some gorgeous. Cochin China suggests the poultry-yard, and Siam is not yet dissociated from the monstrous twins who made it a familiar word when very little else was known about it in Europe. But it is also the land of the lotus and the white elephant, and somewhere in these parts was the Golden Chersonese. The whole region has been called the silken East, and the name is not amiss. They do make silk there, and the epithet seems to sum up the country. It is not the purple, blood-stained East, with its tales of ancient splendours and the conquests of Moham-medanism, but a quiet gleaming country of steaming deltas and bright waters, rich in silk, lacquer and filigree work—with its own troubles and tyrants, no doubt, but lying somewhat apart, and left in peace by the great conquerors of Asia. Unfortunately, Fate permitted me to see only the least romantic and most europeanized part of it—namely, Cochin China and its capital Saigon.

Further India is not a bad name for the whole

region, for it is in many ways a prolongation of India, but Indo-China is still better, for it expresses its character exactly. It is the place where Indian and Chinese influence combine in varying proportions. The dividing-line is the eastern frontier of Cambodja. In that country, Siam, and Burma, Indian influence is predominant—Indian architecture, Indian religion, Indian alphabets, and Indian literature. Yet one is conscious that it is not merely Indian, but Indian with a subtle modification brought by the penetrating influence of China. To the east of Cambodja Chinese influence is predominant; Chinese hieroglyphics take the place of Indian alphabets, and education is founded on the works of Confucius. Neither the Indian nor the Chinese sphere has been touched by Mohammedanism. A glance at the map will show that Rangoon and Bangkok lie at the end of deep bays far from the main sea-route to the east, and the practical difficulty of reaching either of them from Singapore impresses their remoteness on the traveller. The tide of Mohammedan conquest swept eastwards by Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula, reaching Java, Borneo, and even the Philippine Islands, but it left these quiet backwaters undisturbed in the profession of Buddhism.

They even escaped the first waves of European aggression. Like the Mohammedans, the Portuguese and Dutch passed on eastwards, but ultimately France selected Indo-China as her special sphere in Asia; and when once the resistance of the empire of China was overcome, there was no Power strong enough to oppose her occupation.

The connection with France is of fairly ancient date. Missionaries—ominous word for Asiatic in-

dependence—began to settle in the country about 1715, and then comes the old story of troubles and massacres, necessitating European intervention. On the whole, the French had been unlucky in Asia. They had been worsted in India owing to considerations of European politics rather than the local superiority of the British, and there seemed few openings for them elsewhere. It is not surprising if they tightened their grasp on Annam. After various military operations, the King was forced in 1864 to cede Cochin China, which, as a projecting point and the delta of a great river, was more exposed to the visits of Europeans than other parts. Later, after the Franco-German War, the French seemed to be itching for conquest outside Europe. After various disputes and negotiations, in which the King of Annam recognized the Emperor of China as his suzerain and representative, war broke out between France and China, and, as the result of a not over-glorious conflict, Tongking, with all the territory to the south of it, was ceded to France. It is now organized as a colony—Cochin China—and four protectorates—Tongking, Annam, Cambodja, and Laos. The last-named is the mountainous and wild country of the interior. The Kings of Annam and Cambodja govern under the supervision of French residents, but for the purposes of finance and general politics all five divisions are unified under the French Governor-General, whose seat is at Hanoi, in Tongking. The distinction between Annam and Cochin China is merely political, and indicates no difference of race or customs. The narrow strip running southwards from Tongking is generally known as Annam, and has still its King. The rich river-lands to the

south of it, which have been French for more than forty years, are called Cochin China.

Like most cities in Indo-China, Saigon is situated in the midst of a labyrinth of streams, in this case the branches of the Donnai, which flows into the sea near the mouths of the Mekong. The steamer threads its way through swamps covered with low green shrubs, and arrives at last at a rather commonplace, French-looking town. Europeans exiled to distant lands generally take a pride and pleasure in transporting as much of their native land as possible to their new residence, and Frenchmen do this more than others. The heart of the Anglo-Indian is not so much in London as the heart of the French colonial is in Paris. Saigon is simply a French city in a bad climate, where everything is unreasonably dear. The native quarters are neither conspicuous nor interesting, and there are no fine native buildings. Three miles distant is the large Chinese town of Cholon, connected with Saigon by a canal, and containing about 100,000 inhabitants. It is the centre of the rice trade in Cochin China, and in it may be seen pleasure-grounds and temples in far finer style than any the Annamese have built. Not only is China the most commercial and industrious part of the East, but the industry and small trade of many ports outside the empire—such as Saigon, Manila, Batavia, Bangkok, and Singapore—is largely in Chinese hands; and this may be a fact of considerable importance in connection with the awakening and progress of China.

One sees at once that Saigon is not a British colony. In the centre is an opera-house with cafés round it, in which the population congregate for an

hour or two after 6 p.m. to play dominoes and drink *sirops*. These amusements may be frivolous, but what can be more sensible than to take refreshment out of doors at the end of a tropical day, if insects do not dispute the enjoyment of the evening air? For in the tropics he who sits down to a repast is not always sure whether he will play the greater part as guest or as viand. But it is not merely the fear of mosquitoes, but an innate aversion to publicity in social matters, that banishes this open-air life from our colonies. When the sun sets, the Briton goes to his club, not for frivolities like *sirops*, dominoes, and *feuilletons*, but for long, serious drinks, long, serious games of bridge or whist, and long, serious articles about *The Times* and its book-club. Frenchmen like a *cercle*, but can do without it; but a British possession has its centre in its club, or, rather, it is an ellipse with two foci—the club and the racecourse—of which the latter, though active only intermittently, is a very solemn festival and potent bond of union.

In England I am not much of a motorist; the expense and speed both alarm me. But in the Far East I became a votary of the car for a time, until the passion left me as suddenly as it had come. I think it was the result of visiting the shrine of Juggernaut, and contemplating the chariot of that deity. On leaving India, I whirled round the island of Ceylon in four or five days, and when I found that the steamer was detained for three days at Saigon, I hired a motor and scoured the country round. The civilization of the French is excellent for the motorist; the first thing they do is to make roads and build bridges. There is rarely any diffi-

culty in getting about their colonies, however unsatisfactory you may find things when you do get anywhere.

Motoring gives one a new outlook on the world : one feels inclined to classify living things according to their manner of getting out of the way. In the tropics there are rich materials for the study of this new science. The palm for skill and coolness must be given to cats. They walk across just in front of the machine, and then calmly turn round and look at it. Lizards are equally skilful, and their management of their long tails is beyond all praise ; but they disappear at once into cover, which suggests that they were really frightened. Dogs are in every way inferior to cats, and make a deplorable exhibition of unreasonable temper. Human infants may be classified with dogs ; some simply scream, others shout and throw stones. Elephants behave in this, as in all matters, with dignity and intelligence : they get out of the way, but slowly, calculating very judiciously that neither they nor the motor can afford to provoke a collision. Buffaloes are a pitiful sight. Though apparently stolid and callous, they have, it is said, exquisitely delicate nerves. At any rate, they fall into a paroxysm of fear ; and as they are generally tied together, two and two, they somehow trip one another up, and tumble down twisted in knots of terrified helplessness. The worst of all are chickens and old women. Neither make any attempt to move to the side, but run screaming immediately in front of the motor, with arms or wings stretched out. After a time some chickens perish and some fly, but the old women make the motor change its course, and then get in front of it again.

My chauffeur was an Annamite, a lean, brown, lantern-jawed man, with a scanty pointed beard, from which I presume that he was over forty-five, that being the age at which the usage of Cochin China and of the Far East generally, prescribes that a man should begin to grow hair on his face. He drove well, but, like most people in charge of moving objects, from admirals downwards, he disliked all interference with his style and speed of going. When requested to go quicker, he neither said nor did anything until he came to some rugged or crowded spot, and then he drove with sudden indiscriminating fury, without a word, but with a look which clearly left the responsibility for what might happen with me. He was a man of many languages, but few words, and generally spoke in monosyllables arranged bilingually—*droit*, right; *gauche*, left; *morts*, dead. This last melancholy couple of syllables was prompted by our passage through Annamite cemeteries, new and old, with which these watery plains are covered, for the cult of the dead is still, in spite of Buddhism, the real religion of the country; and every time we passed through a collection of fantastic monuments, the chauffeur said, like a tolling bell, '*Morts, dead,*' or it may have been '*More dead,*' but I think the bilingual interpretation is more in harmony with his manner.

Thus I sped through living and dead Cochin China, decreasing, I regret to say, the number of fowls, but sparing, in spite of very great provocation, the old women. The country is rather flat and rather dull, but neither as flat nor as dull as one at first supposes. Spires and pinnacles are wanting, but

two signs tell one that one is already in the Far East—blue clothes and umbrella-like hats. In India white is the prevalent colour of attire, but somewhere between India and Cochin China people exchange it for blue, which thenceforth becomes the standard colour right on to Japan. The inner meaning of the change is, I think, that people cease to wash much; white garments require numerous ablutions to keep them in even moderate cleanliness, but a Chinaman's old blue suit, like the person of its owner, has little familiarity with water. In many places Chinese run laundries, but they probably rarely wash themselves, just as librarians rarely read. The broad hat, again, is a head-dress as characteristic of a certain region as the turban or fez. It colours the landscape surprisingly: a bright green rice-field and a blue man in a broad yellowish hat—there you have before you the typical country scene of the Far East. Equally characteristic is the paper umbrella, which sometimes replaces the hat. The leisured classes, who can afford to keep their hands idle, let their nails grow long and carry an umbrella or sunshade; those who live by manual labour cut their nails and wear their umbrellas on their heads.

The country is very green; everywhere one sees rice and sugar-cane. There is some beautiful forest, but more of cultivated than of wild nature; trees are planted in avenues by the roads or along the sides of the many rivers, which are crossed by numerous and excellent bridges, often elaborate iron structures. The towns are collections of unpretentious houses, and generally contain as a centre a large covered market built by the French, and there are sure to be ample government buildings. One is struck by the

great number of European officials, and the excellent accommodation erected for them. The French start a new colony by making a lucid, though perhaps somewhat theoretical, statement of what it will require in the way of laws, officials, and buildings, all of which they proceed to supply at once. We, on the contrary, supply them only as required, and that somewhat grudgingly.

The inns are sometimes Chinese and sometimes French. Now and again one sees country houses of some size, consisting of a gateway and a yard surrounded by buildings on three sides, which suggest that there are a fair number of opulent natives. The interior of such houses is decorated with Chinese inscriptions and painted trellis-work. The furniture consists of platform-like objects, which serve indifferently as beds, seats, and tables. At the end of the principal room may often be seen a richly decorated coffin, presented to the head of the household by his offspring; for in the Far East it is thought a very delicate attention to make such an offering to a middle-aged person. The only religious edifice I saw was a pagoda in a wood, as brilliantly coloured and strange of shape as if it had been some huge fungus. It was composed mostly of open courts crowded with figures of imaginary animals, and with the mysterious paraphernalia of the diviner's art. One felt one was in the realm of the fanciful and magical rather than the really artistic. Otherwise there are few native buildings except the aforesaid cemeteries. Their number is, perhaps, not without significance, for though Cochin China has not a particularly gorgeous past, and is not particularly decrepit at present, still, it was once a more vigorous

country than now, and does well to venerate its ancestors.

It is strange how little is known of the history of these regions. Across Indo-China, especially on the frontiers of Siam and Cambodja, are scattered huge masses of ruins without a history. They are not to be numbered among the puzzles of architecture, like the monuments of Easter Island and Mashonaland, for their character appears to be quite clear. They are Hindu temples variously assigned to the seventh or eleventh centuries of this era, and in any case not of extreme antiquity; but the curious thing is that almost all our knowledge comes from an inspection of the monuments themselves, and that we have hardly any record accessible of either their erection or their desertion. Much the same may be said of our knowledge of Hindu civilization in Java and other islands, attested by such gigantic ruins as Boro-Bodor; but though the labours of French and Dutch savants are shedding some light on the history of Indian influence in the countries lying to the east of India, we know surprisingly little about it considering how numerous are its architectural remains. It must have extended on the mainland across Burma, Siam, and Cambodja, and in the islands (arriving, possibly, by another route) at least as far as Java and Bali. It is interesting to notice that Hinduism has been at one period a veritable missionary religion like Buddhism, but also that it has died out everywhere but on its native soil. This is not surprising; Hinduism is a matter, not so much of dogma as of temperament, idiosyncrasy, and even of blood, for the Brahmans are the hereditary intellectual aristocracy of India. In its own country it

overcame and outlived Buddhism—a far more logical and better organized system. But its doctrines were so liberal, or at least so multifarious, that it had difficulty in producing a creed or a church, and it thrived or died with the dynasties that protected it.

The languages of Annam and Cambodja seem allied to that of Pegu, an ancient kingdom now confounded with Burma, but once distinct. In the middle comes a wedge of Siamese, which accords with the known fact that the Thai or Siamese descended from southern China into the northern part of their present kingdom in the thirteenth century. Buddhism was introduced among them from Ceylon, and they probably spread this new and purer form of religion to Cambodja at the expense of the Hinduism or hinduized Buddhism which they found existing there. But though the people whom the Siamese invaded may have been united by a common Hindu civilization, they were probably of many races, and included Mongols, Malays, and the Khmers of Cambodja, whom some have thought to be a Caucasian type. The origin of the Malays and the manner of their dispersal are still matters of dispute. They are spread over the islands of the South Seas and Indo-Pacific even to Madagascar, and here and there on the extreme ends of Asia, such as the Malay Peninsula. Some have supposed they were a people of the mainland driven before invaders into the sea; others, and as it seems to me more justly, that they arose on one of the larger islands and roamed across the ocean, touching here and there the edges of the continent.* Their present distribution shows they

* The most recent theory, however, is that the Munda-Nikobar-Mon-Khmer-Khasi-Malacca languages form, with the Indonesian,

must have possessed extraordinary power of movement and endurance, and it is not likely that a beaten race retiring unwillingly from the land before the pressure of its enemies would have had the vigour to spread across a vast ocean and perform voyages of a magnitude without precedent in those ages.

I did not grudge the mail-steamer the somewhat excessive patriotism which made it stop three whole days in this French possession. On the fourth it reluctantly started for Hong-Kong, and slowly disengaged itself from the labyrinthine river. The Annamite chauffeur burst into dissyllables at my departure, bilingual as usual—‘*Merci, thank you,*’ he said ; ‘*au revoir ; good-bye.*’

Melanesian, and Polynesian languages, one huge family, which stretches from the Panjâb to Easter Island, the stream of migration having started from the extreme west of the whole tract. See P. W. Schmidt, ‘*Die Mon-Khmer Völker,*’ *Arch. für Anthropologie*, Band V., 1906.

III

CANTON

HONG-KONG is certainly a striking example of what European enterprise can do. When it was first occupied by Great Britain in 1841 it was a barren rock with a population of about two thousand, and of no importance. It is now one of the greatest centres of the East: its population is nearly forty thousand; the tonnage of its shipping and the value of its trade are reckoned by millions; its steep cliffs are studded with public and private buildings; its harbours, quays, docks, and arsenals are among the finest in the world, and it has been so thoroughly drained that it has become a sanatorium instead of a notoriously unhealthy place as formerly. The one power against which engineers and doctors are helpless is the typhoon, the rotating cyclone which devastates these seas. The Jesuits of Siccawei, near Shanghai, have an observatory which is largely occupied with foretelling the date of these whirlwinds, but no protection against them has been devised, and last August much damage and loss of life was caused by one which visited the colony.

Although Hong-Kong is a gratifying object of contemplation to the patriot, economist, and

politician, it cannot be said to possess any special interest as a spectacle of men and manners. To see that one must go to Canton, the great Chinese city a few hours distant on the mainland, which was long the only port with which Europeans were allowed to trade. It has not, however, on that account become cosmopolitan, like the ports of the Levant, but, in spite of centuries of European intercourse, remains in its life and customs purely Chinese.

The evening steamer from Hong-Kong reaches Canton about daylight, but the first view is disappointing. The river winds between fields of rice and vegetables, but its banks and the city are hidden in a mist. This mist is mainly due to the smoke of countless breakfast fires kindled on land and on boats, and is the first sign of the dense population inhabiting these plains.

Nothing strikes one more on approaching Canton or any town in the south of China than the river life. According to a Chinese tradition boats were originally imitations of floating leaves, and as they lie massed together, stretching from the banks almost to mid-stream, and leaving only a narrow passage for traffic, they certainly resemble the carpet of vegetation which obstructs sluggish water. They are of all shapes, sizes, and colours : junks with sails like butterflies, painted house-boats belonging to rich Chinese, floating hovels inhabited by floating lepers and beggars who pick up a living by fishing up corpses and selling them to the surviving relatives : salt-boats, rice-boats, fruit-boats, and duck-boats. All these vessels are not merely engines of transport, but the residences of an am-

phibious population, who pay neither ground-rent nor water-rates, but pullulate by myriads on the borders of land and water, and, like the frogs, keep up a ceaseless noise and motion. They mostly belong to a tribe called Tanka, and are said to be the descendants of an aboriginal race driven from the land by the advance of the Chinese, and still forbidden to intermarry with other classes. Crime accommodates itself to this floating world, and assumes an aquatic guise. It is, perhaps, only in China—that museum of customs—that piracy still flourishes. It has been driven from the frequented coast, but the daily papers attest its continued existence on the waters of the West River. It has its romantic side, and can boast of as honourable traditions as any other branch of the noble art of helping oneself to other people's property; for when the Ming dynasty fell before the Manchus in the seventeenth century, Chinese independence was kept alive for some years in the south by the pirate chief Koxinga. The Manchus, a nation of horsemen, were powerless against this marine adversary, and he died in possession of the title of King of Formosa, from which island he had expelled the Dutch.

Life in Canton is most active on the banks of the river. In these uncertain and heaving regions of planks, pontoons, and floating bridges, there is perpetual war and collision between the armies of importing and exporting coolies, all vociferating, and all carrying burdens seemingly much too heavy for the bearers and too large for the narrow passages through which they somehow force their way. Canton is like an ant-hill, and the resemblance increases as one is carried in a chair—the only

means of locomotion in use on land except the feet—through streets so narrow that two chairs have some difficulty in passing. The eaves of the houses on either side nearly touch, and the interval is often bridged by wooden platforms or covered by screens, so that large parts of the town seem like a huge roofed building pierced by many passages. Chinese shops are mostly one-story high, and rarely have any windows. The side facing the street is open, and serves for door and counter. Through these alleys, and in and out of these shops, streams incessantly a crowd so multitudinous and mobile that one loses all count of individuals, and is conscious merely of the agitated mass of human beings running to and fro like the ants, and carrying their wares or purchases. Through the fronts of the shops can be seen dim vistas of workrooms stretching backwards, one behind the other, where people are carving, weaving, writing, or hammering; and as far as the eye can reach, indoors or out of doors, there are always people working or moving, and every piece of work requires a great many workmen. It is equally rare to see a man idling or working alone, and though the industry is enormous, one does not feel sure that the output is commensurate with the labour.

The covered streets are naturally dark, but the obscurity is lessened by the brilliancy of the shops and their contents. Chinese use an extraordinary number of articles made of paper, gilt or painted with the crudest and most gorgeous colours—lanterns, fans, umbrellas, scrolls, and armfuls of artificial flowers. Besides this there are piles of fruit and vegetables, green, yellow, and red, fish,

fowls, and other eatables, which, if not always appetizing, are generally highly coloured. But perhaps the most picturesque feature is the amount of writing. The Chinese are essentially a literary nation, and wherever one goes one sees printed matter, which implies in this country bright colour and artistic shape. On the walls are stuck bills containing advertisements and government notices. Every shop is adorned with ornamental inscriptions, and from ropes stretched across the street hang down every few yards scrolls of many colours, so arranged as to make a contrast between the inscription and the background.

I am quite content to drift through these populous, many-coloured streets, but the guide objects to my aimless musing and gazing, and insists that it is the duty of every tourist to inspect the execution-ground. Though I protest I have no desire to see anything so gruesome, he carries me thither through mean and dingy alleys until we reach a pottery, where the sentences of the law are carried out. I wonder what is the connection, which seems historical, between the potter's field and deeds of blood. Here all that one notices is the shabbiness of the locality, and a lively imagination is required to call up scenes of bloodshed and torture. But though the surroundings are commonplace, there is an element of uncertainty in Chinese executions which must make them a most exciting form of gambling, only there are no prizes to be won. In some cases the local authorities have summary jurisdiction, but as a rule executions require imperial sanction. The list of condemned is sent periodically to the Emperor, who puts a vermilion mark against

the names of those who are to be immediately executed. The whole batch are then led out, not knowing whose turn for punishment has come until the names are read. If a condemned criminal escapes the imperial red pencil three times he is pardoned. It seems not to be known by what principles the Emperor is guided in making his selection, but at the end of the year he burns a list of the condemned, which is supposed to go to the powers of the other world as a report of the way in which he has discharged his duties.

Orientalists are generally thought to be barbarous in their punishments, but the Siamese have a most considerate method of execution. As in China, the criminal is decapitated with a blow of a sword, kneeling, and with his hands bound behind his back, but the special feature of a Siamese execution is that while he is thus waiting a man who appears to be the headsman comes in front of him and begins to sharpen a sword. While the poor wretch's attention is absorbed by what he thinks the preparations for his punishment, the real executioner steals up behind and beheads him while he least expects it. But it would seem that the efficacy of this device must depend on its being very rarely used.

My guide has a remorselessly consecutive mind, and on leaving the execution-ground insists that I must visit Hell. I again protest, but am again overruled, and consent to go on the understanding that we do not stop 'too much long,' a condition which many lost souls would be glad to make. Hell in Canton means a presentment of the infernal regions established by a paternal government for

the terror of evil-doers and the promotion of true religion and virtue. Round the courtyard of a temple are arranged ten pens, answering to the divisions of the under world, and presided over by as many kings, under whose superintendence devils subject the wicked to various tortures, such as sawing asunder and boiling in oil. All this is represented by figures of nearly life size. The artists have concentrated their talent on making the torturers look ferocious, and have paid little attention to the physiognomy of the victims, with the result that the latter show no signs of agony, and a miserable sinner who is being disembowelled looks as unconcerned as if he were having his hair cut. These representations of Hades were introduced under the Sung dynasty in the eleventh century, and the common people believe that every large city on earth has its infernal counterpart below, in which wicked citizens will be tortured till their sins are purged away and they are ready for another birth. It is even supposed that magistrates who have behaved well on earth will be appointed after death to a similar position in the next world. More philosophical is the story which makes the torturing devils say to the condemned: 'Do not blame us. We are only your own bad actions in bodily shape.'

The temples in South China, especially those belonging to the Taoist religion, are strange places. Some few are beautiful, but most are simply grotesque. There are no forbidden, inaccessible shrines as in India. A foreigner may go everywhere and look at everything without interference from anyone but beggars. The idols are usually gigantic dolls, often with wax faces and long hair and beards.

The central figures are attended by others, representing servants, winged horses, and various magical creatures, all gigantic and ludicrously inartistic, for in modern religious art China stands even lower than the Catholic countries of southern Europe. Yet the altar vessels, particularly the great incense-burners, are generally of good and sometimes of exquisite workmanship. As one looks at these personages of wax and pasteboard, one feels as if one had wandered by mistake on to the stage of a pantomime intended to be seen by night and at a distance, but dismally absurd in the light of day. Even stranger is the scene when a funeral passes through the streets. The procession generally includes paper effigies of dragons and figures said to represent the secretaries of the King of the Dead, and gods, men, and dragons move on together in a fantastic pageant.

The Chinese are probably the most superstitious and least religious people in the world. In a mosque or Indian temple one is struck with the real religious fervour of the worshippers, though it may assume strange external forms. But here, though the shrines are thronged on market-days, and the wax dolls are surfeited with offerings of candles, incense, and paper flowers, few are ever seen to pray. Most of the visitors come to 'get luck,' or consult diviners, who have stalls round the temple courts, and decide human affairs by a sort of ecclesiastical tossing-up. After some ceremonies two pieces of wood are thrown into the air, and the way they fall indicates the answer to the question asked. Others inquire how to cure a sick relative, and receive from a priest a magic number corresponding to a prescription,

which is said to be generally innocuous, though its character is determined, not by the nature of the malady, but by occult reasons. Women may be seen offering small figures to the Queen of Heaven. The date is registered, and the goddess is supposed to send a son within a suitable period.

After emerging from the Temple of Hell I firmly vetoed my guide's proposal to inspect the prisons, and visited instead a rich Chinese to whom I had a letter. Externally the house was so unobtrusive as to be almost invisible; one merely noticed that, unlike the shops round it, it had not an open front. Inside it was a complete and agreeable change from the crowded streets. With that topsy-turvyness of which foreigners often complain, the streets were covered and dark, but the house was open and light. In fact, I do not know if it should be called a house in a garden or a garden in a house. Passages and pavilions were inextricably mixed up with a fantastic rockery, out of which grew small trees, mostly distorted into the shapes of birds and animals, and so intricate were the winding paths that the area seemed to be twice its real size. The rooms and pavilions were clean and decorated with landscapes painted in sober colours, diversified here and there with inscribed vermilion tablets. Chinese houses look to our eyes hard and bright. Everything is painted, lacquered, or covered with silk, but neither cushions nor carpets are much used. There were no flowers in the garden, but out of a miniature lake nearly covered with the broad round leaves of the lotus rose a few red blossoms.

Canton is surrounded by a wall, and from the top of a five-storied pagoda built on this rampart a

good view can be obtained over the city. But most Chinese towns do not look well from such points of vantage. In other oriental countries the houses are generally grouped round some conspicuous edifices, mosques, temples, or palaces, but here the uniformity of the architecture is almost unbroken. The most conspicuous edifice in Canton is unquestionably the Roman Catholic cathedral; next comes a tall pagoda of many stories, elegant but not imposing, and one notices a number of solid, impressive blocks, which are neither palaces, forts, nor temples, but pawnshops. The rest of the city is a collection of curved roofs, as varied in detail and ornament as the boats on the river, but, like them, making an effect simply as a mass, not as units. A large Chinese house or temple does not, as a rule, mean a large building, but a collection of buildings distributed over successive courtyards, and, as a rule, the decoration of these buildings is lavished on the roofs, little attempt being made to raise or ornament the sides. China has few old monuments. Stone is used for paving streets and for foundations, but comparatively rarely for superstructures, which are generally of painted wood with roofs of coloured tiles. Hence the towns look modern and all much the same. To appreciate them one must not take a general bird's-eye view, but plunge into the streets. There, amidst much that is filthy and grotesque, one finds many exquisite details, particularly in coloration, just as Chinese landscapes, if seen from a train, appear wanting in distinction and variety, but on nearer examination disclose lakes, hills, and rivers of rare beauty.

My guide, as I have said, had an appetite for

horrors, but I am glad that I did not refuse to visit what he called the City of the Dead. It proved to be a mortuary establishment for the temporary housing of coffins, and consisted of a series of court-yards enclosing pleasant flower-gardens. On each garden opened a row of apartments consisting of a bedroom behind and sitting-room in front. In the bedroom stood a coffin, with a wash-hand stand and some simple furniture of the most modern make ; in the sitting-room a chair, and in front of it a table bearing a cup of tea and some ornaments. If a corpse is to be removed to some other town for interment, or if the astrologers and diviners decide that it would be inauspicious to bury it immediately after death, it spends the interval in this ghostly hotel, and the bedroom furniture, the chair, and the tea are for the use of the spirit, which until interment is not able to go to the next world. If such arrangements were discovered in some Babylonian tomb six or seven millenniums old it would not be surprising, but to find them in the twentieth century, with cheap, new bedroom furniture and a modern hotel bill for the ghost's entertainment, is truly prodigious.

I express my astonishment to the guide. He professes entire scepticism, and says he thinks men die like cattle, and that Buddhism, Christianity, and Taoism are alike folly. But on being pressed, he admits that if for some reason his father's corpse could not be buried at once, he would, in compliance with old custom and general opinion, take a room for him here.

IV

TOWNS AND ROADS

IN speaking of Canton I have not dwelt on a striking but disagreeable feature of Chinese towns—namely, their extreme filth. The fact is that many parts of Canton are quite clean, though many others are very dirty, and it is unfortunately these other parts which are imitated in most cities of the empire. I will not attempt to describe this filth and want of sanitation; it is not agreeable to see, smell, or write about. I will merely say, with one of those literary allusions of which Chinese are so fond, that there is probably no city in the empire where the foreigner does not wish for the return of Han Yü, a sage of whom it was written, ‘Wherever he passed, he purified.’ But, unfortunately, he has long been dead, and there remains only a beautiful epitaph on him saying, ‘Above in heaven there was no music, and God was sad, and summoned him to his place beside the throne.’

Of all the various forms of rubbish which infest the streets of towns, there is only one which is less exuberant in China than in the west—namely, scraps of paper. The Chinese have an almost superstitious respect for all written or printed matter, and count it little short of impiety to tear it or tread

on it. Boxes are set in the streets into which people put any old paper they may have, and the contents, together with any other scraps that may be found lying about, are collected and reverently burned by men who are paid by benevolent societies or rich individuals.

After all, I dare say a Chinaman might maintain that English towns are really dirtier than Chinese. You have only to commit any crime, including dirtiness, on a sufficiently large scale, and people will be impressed by the grandeur of your exploits rather than by their villainy. If, like the Chinese, you make a mess in the streets, you are denounced as a nameless and shameless disgrace to humanity. If, on the other hand, you pollute a whole district, if you blacken the earth, blight the trees, and hide the sky with factory smoke, you get called nothing worse than an industrial centre or an emporium. It is strange that these filthy Chinese towns are not more unhealthy. Nevertheless, all authorities are agreed that the population is unusually dense, that the people are long-lived and strong, enduring privations and recovering from illnesses which would kill Europeans, and that, in spite of what appears to a foreigner the unbearable discomfort of daily life, cheerfulness and contentment are the rule. This is a high character to give a country, particularly a country of enormous extent like China; and the good qualities seem to accompany the Chinaman wherever he goes, for he can accommodate himself to all climates and all civilizations, though he obstinately maintains his own customs and rarely abandons the idea of going home.

Walking in a Chinese town is often a difficult

operation, because the various shops encroach on the thoroughfare as much as their owners choose. Chinese law recognizes the right of every householder over the road in front of his door without imposing any obligation to keep it in repair. It is a fortunate thing that it is to the interest of merchants that passers-by should stand in front of their shops, for otherwise they would soon block up the whole street. But all the streets are not full. Sometimes one is surprised by passing suddenly out of a bustling business quarter into deserted and ruinous squares that seem to have been abandoned a hundred years. Such places are in many cases results of the Taiping rebellion, which devastated the south of China and the valley of the Yangtse. It was during this rebellion that Nanking lost its celebrated porcelain tower. Suchow, near Shanghai, has preserved its pagodas, but the buildings near the city wall remain in a ruinous condition, and have never been repaired.

If the roads are not good inside the city, they are much worse outside. It is almost impossible to imagine anything more uncomfortable for locomotion than a Chinese paved way, constructed by some benevolent monarch of antiquity, but so disjointed and broken by the wear of ages that its flagstones have become a weariness to the feet and an intolerable curse to wheeled vehicles. It is only in wet weather, when one is glad to find any firm support in the sea of liquid mud, that such stones justify their existence at all. But the ordinary Chinese road is a much humbler affair, quite devoid of any paving or macadamizing, and merely a path between two fields, with a strong tendency to turn

into a ditch. It is singular that in a country where commercial instinct is so strong, and where people move about so much, these bad communications should be tolerated. One reason is that all land is private property, and it would be against Chinese ideas that the government should interfere with an individual's management of that portion of his property which happens to be a road; another is that in many parts the real highways of the empire are found in the network of rivers and canals covering the whole district. This makes the leisurely transport of merchandise independent of terrestrial conditions, but those for whom this method of progression is too slow will find all locomotion on land most difficult and precarious, especially in wet weather. Outside the foreign settlements anything which can be called a carriage is very rare. For natives there are heavy carts and wheelbarrows; for foreigners the commonest vehicle is the jinricksha. This conveyance, though so conspicuous a feature in the Far East, is said to be the invention of a missionary in Japan about thirty years ago, and not a native institution.

Even more comfortable than a jinricksha is that genuine Chinese institution—a chair borne by two or more bearers. Though somewhat narrow and cramping to the limbs, it has one advantage—that one is almost invisible within it. The curiosity and prying ways of the Chinese are intolerable to most of us. They will almost mob a European in the street, surround his railway-carriage, hold their children up to the window to see the strange animal, and poke their heads in to get a better view. This conduct hardly indicates respect, but it is not meant to be

nearly as rude as it seems, for there is no privacy in Chinese domestic life ; no one has any nerves, and no one minds any amount of observation or noise. Nay, rather, they like it, and miss it when it is absent. Chinese who have been requested to spend the night in their employer's premises at Shanghai instead of returning to the native quarter have declared that they could not sleep because it was so quiet.

My own experience of Chinese has been very favourable. As servants they are excellent, both for remembering and foreseeing ; and I have found others, not only those who have a smattering of European education, but members of the middle class ignorant of all languages but their own, quite civil and ready to explain things to the foreigner. I have even been offered refreshment gratis by a Chinaman. It happened in this wise : I was overcome with hunger when visiting a remote Buddhist temple where there were no means of buying provisions. The priests, I confess, were not hospitable, though hospitality is one of their duties. They behaved like the priest and Levite in the parable, and, so to speak, passed by on the other side, and spoke of the merits of fasting. But an artist who was regilding the belly of the Buddha of the Future behaved like a good Samaritan, and shared his meal with me. It may be that he belonged to a peculiarly liberal-minded class of men, for the Chinese proverb says : 'The image-maker does not worship the gods ; he knows what they are made of.' I learnt from my friend and benefactor many curious facts as to idol-making, of which fascinating trade I very nearly made myself an apprentice. One is that the Buddha of the Future is one of the most expensive images,

because the Chinese represent him (for what reason antiquarians have never been able to discover) with a huge protuberant abdomen and fat cheeks wreathed in smiles. Then, again, a conscientiously made idol is not complete when the outward form and features are finished. Bags of white and red silk, representing the human intestines, have to be put into the hollow of the body, and also packets of precious and mysterious substances. Then a living animal, such as a centipede or a mouse, is introduced and immured, so as to give life to the image. The eyes are left blank until the divinity has been placed in the position which he is going to occupy in the temple. Then the pupils are painted in, and the process of god-making, or deification, is complete.

A Chinese town is naturally full of interest and variety for a stranger, but one cannot help feeling that those for whom the charm of novelty does not exist must lead somewhat dull lives. The incessant industry of Chinese existence, often begun before sunrise, leaves little time for amusement, although markets and fairs offer an agreeable combination of business and pleasure. After working hours, a well-to-do Chinamen may frequent concerts or theatres, and perhaps before doing so dine with friends at a restaurant.

There is no subject about which it is so difficult to reconcile European and oriental taste as music. To nearly all Europeans both Chinese and Japanese music sounds like irritating discord. Yet Confucius set great store by it, and it is related that after hearing certain classical compositions he could not distinguish the taste of meat for three months—a remarkable result, and the frivolous westerner will be liable

to think that he was thoroughly upset. Modern music is divided into sacred and popular. The former is chiefly used in the imperial ceremonies, and is described by the few who have heard it as plaintive but not unpleasing. Popular music is noisy and monotonous. In many states of mind it is intolerably irritating, and the best I can say for it is that, if one abandons oneself to its influence with sympathetic receptivity, one may feel a certain excitement and rhapsody of fanaticism. It often has the tremulous, throbbing passion which one finds in Wagner, but never a vestige of the flowing melodies of Beethoven or Mozart.

The theatre is the national pastime of China. There are several in every large town, and bands of strolling players visit the country villages. Except in the matter of dresses, which are gorgeous, little is needed in the way of properties; a hall and a stage are all that are required, and even the hall is not necessary if the weather is fine. No scenery of any kind is used, nor is there any attempt to make the action seem real. Dead bodies walk off the stage, and sometimes hardly take the trouble to die properly. Hence Europeans generally find Chinese plays intolerably dull, the more so as even those who are well acquainted with the language cannot understand the stilted and artificial style used in declamation. But the Chinaman looks at the whole thing from another point of view. He does not go to see a spectacle or to hear fine language, for in China the drama is expressly excluded from literature, and actors and their descendants may not compete for the literary examinations. No great poets have written dramas, as in Greece and India. Hence delineation

of character or even a good plot is not expected. The performers are reciters rather than actors in our sense, and all that is expected of them is that they should make a story seem real by their gestures and intonations. These seem to us somewhat exaggerated, but they clearly satisfy the audience, who show great enthusiasm over such things as a child crying or the voice of an angel heard gradually descending from heaven. It would seem that, contrary to the common belief of Europeans, Chinese plays are not very long, and, as a rule, take less than an hour to act. The performance is inordinately long, and may last all day or several days ; but it is composed of a number of short pieces, which succeed one another without intervals. Some of the learned maintain that the drama was first introduced under Kublai Khan and the Mongol dynasty, but according to a Chinese tradition a monarch of the T'ang dynasty paid a visit to the moon, and brought back with him this new style of entertainment, which may perhaps account for the extraordinary character of the Chinese theatre.

V

ON THE YANGTSE

CHINA has shown more reluctance to accept railways than any other country, but has yielded at last, and several lines have been laid or are under construction. They do not, however, materially assist locomotion near the coast except in the north, and the longest track at present open runs from Peking to Hankow, on the Yangtse, with a prospect of extension southwards to Canton. In a country with so many navigable rivers and canals these internal railways are more useful to commerce than communications between the coast and the interior; and Hankow, though 600 miles from the mouth of the river, is for all practical purposes a seaport.

It is hard to believe that Hankow is accessible by rail from Calais with hardly any break. At present the connection is somewhat theoretical, on account of the international difficulties which obstruct free passage between the Russian and Japanese spheres in Manchuria. But the lines are there. The Siberian Railway has a branch running from Harbin to Niu-Chwang and Port Arthur. Another line runs from Niu-Chwang to Tientsin and Peking, whence one can proceed to Hankow by the railway which I shall describe.

Wishing to see as large an extent of China as might be possible in a short time, I determined to take a steamer from Shanghai to Hankow, four days' journey up the river, and then go on by train to Peking. The trip is worth taking, though one does not pass many remarkable places; and Nanking, which is considered to be on the Yangtse, is really some miles from the bank, and not accessible while the steamer stops. The Yangtse somewhat reminds one of the Volga, but is much larger and more picturesque. The lower reaches are naturally the least interesting, for the broad flood of yellow water is almost a sea, and one has only a distant vision of low banks; but a little further upstream hills appear, and, though the river is still a couple of miles wide, the steamer generally hugs the bank.

The scenery is surprisingly green, and at the end of a torrid summer shows no trace of yellow. Not only the plains but the mountains are clothed in a bright, light verdure pleasant to the eye, and suggesting great fertility. Yet rivers in China are by no means regarded as blessings. The Hwang-Ho is even known as 'China's Sorrow,' for the sudden changes of its course cause untold destruction to life and property, and the earliest traditions relate how ancient sages struggled to regulate its wayward waters. The Yangtse, though larger, is less dangerous, because less capricious, but one can see that its annual rise (which was at its maximum when I made my journey) is as much a danger as a benefit to agriculture on its banks. For this the agriculturists themselves are partly to blame. In other countries the land liable to inundation would be left uncultivated; but in this teeming industrious region houses are built not only on the

high-water mark, but even below it, and one passes a succession of partially submerged dwellings, where the inhabitants sit disconsolately on the roof, and even more disconsolate cattle wade in the water. Still, the steamers and junks on the river, the villages on the shore, and the bustle of the river ports, bear emphatic testimony to the commerce and general prosperity of the province.

Most countries have some characteristic form of architecture which plays a part in the landscapes. In Mohammedan lands it is the minaret ; in England, the village steeple ; in China, the pagoda. Pagodas are circular or octagonal towers, always of an odd number of stories, generally seven or nine. They are said to have been originally modifications of the Indian shrines built over Buddhist relics ; but in China they have in modern times lost this special religious significance, though they are often seen in the neighbourhood of temples. When complete, they are sometimes faced with coloured tiles, and bear hanging on each story rows of bells which ring in the wind ; but, though beautiful objects from a distance, they are generally in woefully bad repair, and shrubs may be seen growing on the roofs. Chinese Buddhism, though corrupt, is fortunate in having one good feature which cannot be destroyed by doctrinal degeneration. A real love of nature and a feeling that a holy life is most easily led in peaceful and beautiful scenery has caused picturesque buildings to be erected in picturesque places, especially on mountain-sides ; and the hills which bound the Yangtse show many clusters of monasteries, pagodas, and temples overhanging the river. In one place, near Kiu-Kiang, a precipitous rock rises out of mid-

stream, with religious edifices climbing up its steep sides.

Perhaps the Yangtse looks at its best when one of the comparatively narrow gorges is seen by moonlight. It then resembles a Chinese painting, or, rather, one sees the source from which many painters drew their inspiration. The silhouettes of the hills and rocks stand out clearly above the swirling tide, and the riverside towns are marked by rows of lights burning, not only on shore, but on the numerous boats lying below the city walls. Illuminated pagodas, with their many stories outlined in red, green, and yellow lamps, remind one, even in the dark, that one is in China.

Hankow has been called the Chicago of the Far East. For some reason, most places where people make money are uninteresting, and it is no exception to this rule. The surrounding country is flat, and when the river is in full flood the city is only an inch above the water, which seems a perilously narrow margin. But commercially the position is superb. By means of the upper reaches and tributaries of the Yangtse, the city receives the trade of western and south-western China, while the railway which has been constructed to Peking taps the northern districts. Strictly speaking, Hankow (or Han mouth), though the name commonly used by Europeans for the whole locality, is one of three cities clustered round the confluence of the Han and Yangtse. Across the Han is Han-ying, while on the southern bank of the main river is Wu-Chang, regarded by the Chinese as the most important of the three places, and the residence of the Viceroy for Hunan and Hupei, the two provinces lying north and south of



PAGODA OF TOJI AND TEA GARDEN, KYOTO.

the Po-Vang Lake. The present Viceroy, Chang Chih Tung, has the reputation of being one of the ablest men in China, and of having prevented a general massacre of foreigners during the Boxer troubles. He is said to be now doing his best to introduce reforms which will enable China to compete with European nations. The provincial troops have been reorganized and armed with weapons and equipments, imitated from Japanese models. Education on modern lines is actively encouraged, and an exhibition illustrative of commercial processes and products has been opened. It is said to be visited by crowds of interested spectators, but I was not able to see it ; for among the many reforms introduced, provision for crossing the Yangtse in rough weather is not included. The country is occasionally visited by severe storms, in which the great river is as dangerous to ordinary boats as any sea, and there are no bridges and no vessels of sufficient strength to keep up communication. It is, perhaps, not fanciful to see in these violent storms which suddenly break up fine weather an analogy to the national character. The ordinary Chinaman is a placid and stolid person, who appears to have no nerves and an infinite capacity for work ; but not only is he ready on occasion to massacre foreigners (for which several reasons may be assigned), but missionaries and others acquainted with country life unanimously testify to the frequency of violent quarrels between families and villages arising out of most trivial incidents.

Not being able to reach Wu-Chang, I contented myself with visiting Han-ying, which is, among other things, the seat of the provincial mint and of a large Buddhist temple. One of the characteristic irregu-

larities of the Chinese empire, and one of the greatest difficulties for the traveller, is that most provinces have their own currency, which outside their boundaries is exchangeable only at a considerable discount. European banks issue special notes for Shanghai, Hankow, Tientsin, etc. ; and native coins not only vary in different provinces, but are often not accepted at their face value even in the provinces where they are coined. This is because economy in the amount of silver used, as compared with the amount paid for by government, is one of the many ways by which viceroys supplement their inadequate emoluments. Then, again, Chinese accounts are kept in taels, which are supposed to be ounces of silver, and do not correspond to any existing coin, which is a source of confusion. But even the equivalence of the tael to an ounce of silver is not really uniform throughout the empire, for 98 taels, according to the reckoning of the imperial Treasury, is equivalent to 102 taels at Shanghai, and to 100 ounces by standard weight. Those who are acquainted with Turkey will see in this a resemblance to the variations in the value of the piastre in different towns.

The Buddhist temple at Han-ying is a good specimen of these edifices as found in south and middle China. It probably contains more gold than the mint. Even the purer Buddhism of Burma and Ceylon is not entirely free from the conviction that gilding is as efficacious as charity for covering a multitude of sins, and wealthy devotees spread the precious leaf over as many yards of images and temple wall as their means permit. Though the Buddhist temples are less grotesque than those of

the Taoists, I have seen few in China which are even partially successful specimens of religious art. The great gilt images arrest attention, and in those copied most closely from Indian models the lineaments sometimes retain the gracious calm which marks the traditional representations of the Buddha. But when drawing on their own fancy the Chinese seem to associate the divine with comic joviality, and gods and saints look like Rabelaisian monks after an ample dinner. This is particularly noticeable in temples where, as at Han-ying, there is a hall containing five hundred images of Buddhist worthies, often, but most incorrectly, styled by Europeans the five hundred genii. They are really a collection of all sorts of notabilities—Chinese, Indian, and other—who have done anything which by a charitable interpretation could be regarded as pious. Among them is a European, generally said to be Marco Polo, though the learned are not agreed on this point. But what is most striking is the more or less comic appearance of all the images; they are not heavenly—hardly even edifying. On the other hand, all the ornamentation of the temples is strictly proper; it has neither the power nor the obscenity of Indian imagery. A prominent decoration is generally a figure of Kwan-yin, the goddess of Mercy, surrounded by a large sculptured or embossed landscape. The deity has often been compared to the Madonna, but the resemblance, though striking, is accidental, for the child which she sometimes carries in her arms is not her own offspring, but a gift, which she is ready to bestow on worshippers desiring sons. She is the protectress of travellers, and the landscape round her image represents wayfarers in peril by land and sea

to whom she offers aid. In one such sculpture I have seen a representation of a steamer with realistic figures of seasick passengers.

On returning, I passed along a broad and very excellent raised road built by the Viceroy round the Chinese part of Hankow, and a model of what Chinese roads might be, but, considering the climate, somewhat exposed. Suddenly there came a storm from the north, sweeping down with an unnatural combination of dust and rain. Now, the carriage-folk were in rickshaws with hoods that acted as sails, most of the pedestrians were driving strings of pigs, and nearly everybody was carrying paper fans or paper umbrellas. When the storm burst, confusion ensued. The rickshaws drove before the blast, the fans and umbrellas flew, the pigs squealed and bolted, and what with rickshaws, umbrellas, and pigs, a great part of the crowd was driven headlong down the steep sides of the road. I count it a reward of my piety in visiting the shrine of Kwan-yin that I returned safely to my hotel.

VI

HANKOW TO PEKING

THERE are two trains on the line from Hankow to Peking—the express and the slow train. They may be compared to two of China's sacred animals, the dragon and the tortoise. Alluring time-tables showing the speed of the express may be seen in Shanghai; it is glorious in advertisements, like the dragon in wall-paintings, but, as far as my experience goes, it is, like the dragon, mythical. On reaching its lair at Hankow, one finds merely a tradition that it was once run as an experiment, and a pious hope that it may run again 'when circumstances permit.' It remains to take the slow train, which has obvious analogies to the tortoise. It is real and very deliberate. It takes three days to go to Peking, and stops every night about six o'clock, and waits till the next morning.

When in memory I review this long journey, it seems to me that the whole time I travelled through a field of rice, barley, millet, or other grain, and, really, this impression is hardly an exaggeration of the facts. Excluding towns, villages, and cemeteries, the train probably does not pass through a mile of uncultivated country in all. The plain is parcelled out into fields, divided, not by hedgerows, but by

inconspicuous boundaries, which do not interrupt the appearance of continuous cultivation ; and even the sides of the hills are cut into terraces, on which rice is grown. Two or even three crops of rice are raised in some localities during the year, and it is said that when the plants are young the water in which they grow is utilized for fattening small fish. North of the Hwang-Ho a tall variety of millet is the principal grain, and, owing to its great size, gives an appearance of luxuriant fertility to the country ; whereas rice-fields, though of a beautiful and delicate green, have an uncomfortably swampy look.

It is surprising that a country which seems one huge granary should have a notoriety only too well deserved for famines and starvation. There are various reasons for these periods of scarcity : the rich soil is not found everywhere ; in some districts the ground is unpropitious, and supports life only in return for unremitting industry and favourable weather. In a climate where extreme heat and cold alternate, as in North China, a slight excess or irregularity in the seasons may suffice to freeze or parch all the crops. But the commonest causes of famine are, no doubt, destructive inundations, which may deprive the most fertile districts of their entire stock of food-stuffs, and the difficulty of communication and transport. Produce is not easily or quickly distributed, and one province may be left starving while its neighbour is enjoying superfluity.

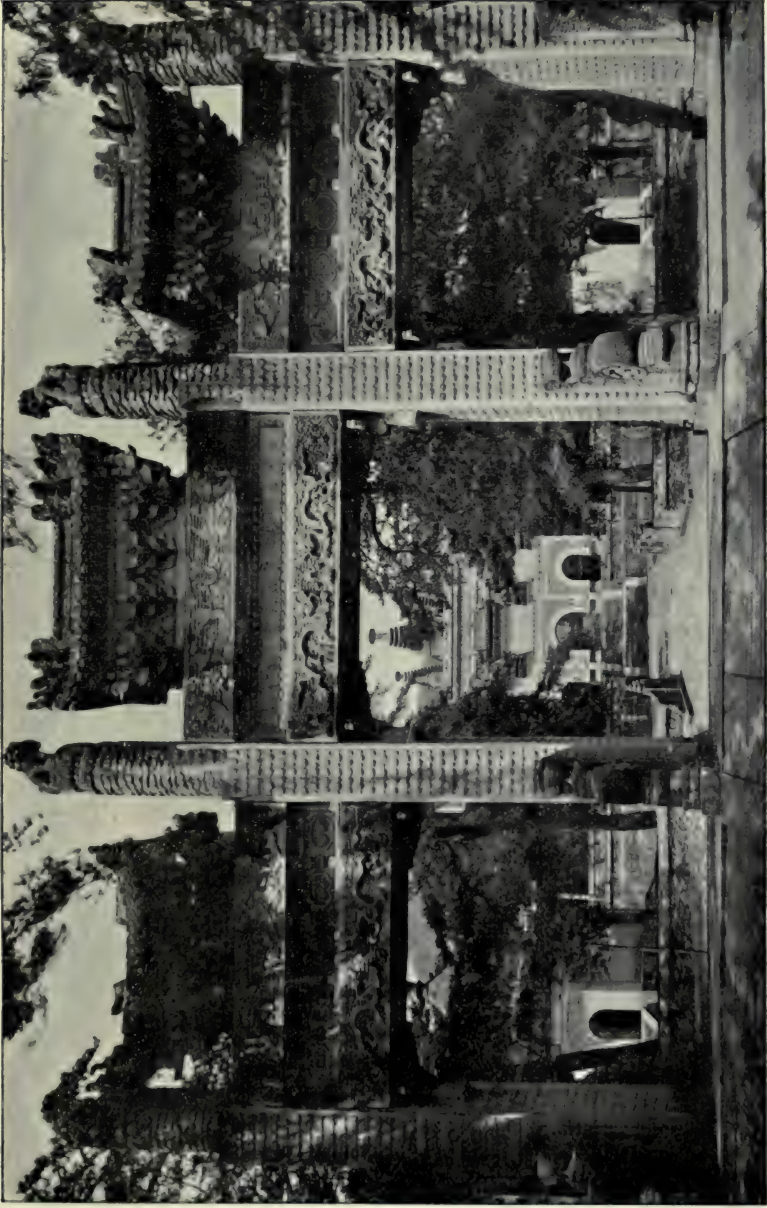
Chinese towns, unless fortified, rarely form a conspicuous feature in the landscape, and during all the journey south of the Hwang-Ho human buildings seem represented by big or small villages, of which, indeed, there is no lack. On their outskirts are little shrines,

too low for a man to enter, dedicated to the deities of Earth; and not far off is the village cemetery, generally a collection of simple mounds without stone monuments, but noticeable in this country of monotonous cultivation. The position of a cemetery is all-important in China, for the welfare of the dead is supposed to be affected by all sorts of physical influences, such as slopes, wind, and water. A hill facing the south is considered the best position. A less pleasant mortuary arrangement, which is chiefly found in the southern provinces, is a brick erection called a baby tower, into which the poorer classes throw the bodies of children who are thought too young to be buried. It would appear, however, that these towers are not a method of infanticide, as has sometimes been stated. A charitable association cleans out the towers from time to time, and disposes of the bodies.

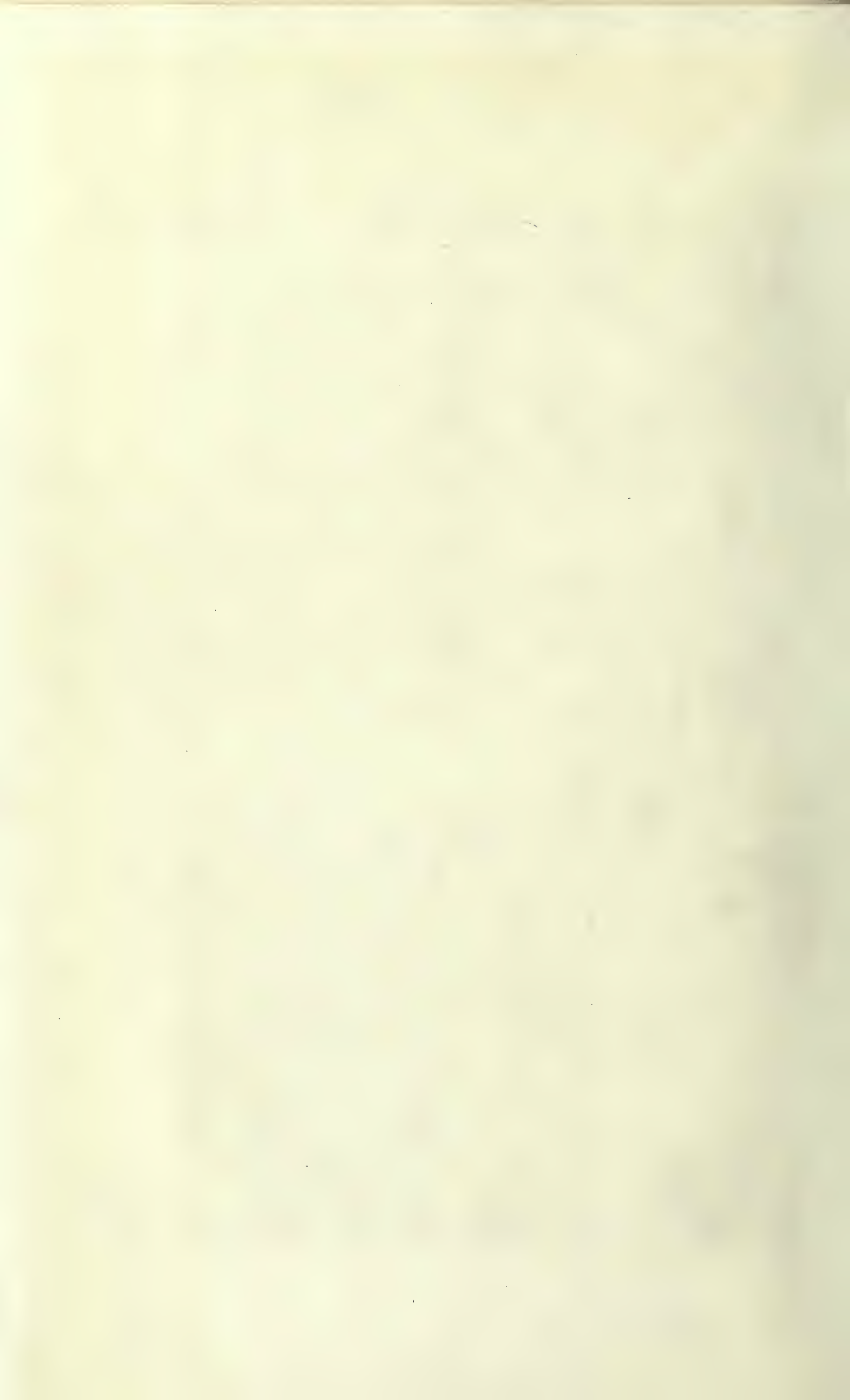
The Hwang-Ho, an evil-looking yellow stream, curling in vicious eddies along that part of its sandy bed which it has selected as its course for the moment, divides the journey from Hankow to Peking into two parts, and is close to the southern boundary of the province of Chihli, or Direct Rule, so called because the capital is in it. North of the river we come into the land of the loess, a loose light soil of prodigious fertility and the joy of the agriculturist, but extremely annoying to other people. Some geologists style it a subaerial deposit, or, in plainer language, the dust of ages, supposed to have been swept down to these regions from the steppes of Mongolia. Others think it is a sediment marking the bottom of an old sea. The simple traveller feels inclined to think that it supports either theory, according to the

weather. When it is dry it fills the air with a fine, penetrating powder, which sometimes produces a sort of dust fog, and when it is wet it creates an ooze worthy of any sea-bottom, besides turning the roads into rivers. Owing to the lightness of the soil, the roads quickly wear away, and sink several feet below the level of the surrounding fields, and the heavy rain running into them forms a rushing torrent. I have only seen the changes of weather that occur in the hot season, but it is easy to imagine how extreme are the variations between summer and winter. Yet on the whole northern China is a more picturesque and interesting country than the south. The mountains are more sharply cut, and often fantastically serrated; on the banks of rivers and even the sides of roads the soft earth is worn into sharp, strange curves, and the buildings produce more effect, particularly the walled cities. Most of them have long since grown too big for their walls, and have, so to speak, boiled over, the enclosed space becoming little more than a large citadel; but the ramparts remain, and supply just that element of size and grandeur which is generally wanting in Chinese buildings.

The journey from Hankow to Peking is undoubtedly monotonous, but it is by no means lifeless. There are crowds of people everywhere—in the carriages, on the platforms, in the fields, on the roads, when roads can be seen. I wonder why Europeans often say that all Chinese look alike. It is a most thoughtless assertion, for the expression and physical type vary as much as in any European country. The explanation may be that people look at Chinamen's backs instead of their faces. Seen from behind, the pigtail does impart a certain



MONASTERY NEAR PEKING.



uniformity to the human head. In China there are no curly locks or burnished baldness, and though one may sometimes see a greyish pigtail, thin and pathetic, as a rule all variations of colour are obliterated with dye. Almost everybody's hair is black, and almost everybody's clothes are blue. Among the poorer classes a dull indigo is the usual colour. The well-to-do show more variety, but various shades of blue silk are commonly worn, particularly a light, bright slate colour. An elegant costume often comprises a harmony of blue shades, and the labouring classes produce the same effect by patching their garments. White is only worn by mourners, and children wear nothing at all, sometimes remaining stark naked till they are seven or eight years old. The prevalent blue is somewhat modified in wet weather. Labourers then wear great-coats made of straw, and the whole population turn out with gigantic paper umbrellas, which are generally yellow or reddish. People working in the fields often wear a hat made like an umbrella, and are themselves the living stick which supports it.

Women also, though they go abroad sparingly, add colour to a Chinese crowd. It is really not necessary to go to China to see a Chinese lady. The reader has only to imagine one of the beauties depicted on screens or porcelain come to life. The face is brilliantly painted, and all individual expression is hidden by a fixed smile. One can hardly say more of the dresses than that they are as brilliantly coloured as the faces. Even if the ground colour be sombre, it is relieved by flowers and ribbons of bright red, green, and yellow, and the general effect, though hardly artistic, does not offend the eye. I

fancy this represents the tastes of the middle classes. Ladies of the upper classes do not show themselves, and probably wear more subdued colours. Though the Manchu dynasty could make the male population of China wear pigtaails, they have not been able to stop the women deforming their feet. K'ang-Hsi, the second Manchu Emperor, forbade the insane practice, but had to withdraw the order four years later, and an edict by the present Empress Dowager does not seem to have had much effect. Chinese ladies still insist on converting their feet into 'golden lilies,' as the distorted organs are termed, and many men of liberal ideas would hesitate to marry a woman with natural feet. The prejudice is extraordinary, for no reason can be given for the practice, and it is not followed by the ladies of the imperial family and other Manchus, so that it is hardly necessary for social prestige.

Chinese platforms are not picturesque by daylight, but after dark in the Far East paper lanterns add a touch of romance to the most commonplace scenes, and when a train arrives at a large station to spend the night, it is met by the representatives of fifteen or twenty inns carrying white flags, whereon are embroidered the name and praises of their establishments, and huge coloured lanterns as splendid as Chinese characters and painted monsters can make them. As the railway provides no accommodation for the night, not even a lamp, I had on one occasion to entrust myself to these gentlemen, a somewhat risky proceeding, as my Chinese was of the most theoretical and literary description. After examining the various flags, I determined to patronize the Hotel of Concentrated Fragrance, being moved to this

choice not so much by the name of the hostelry as by the physiognomy of its representative.

Now, I know that the reader thinks I shall say that the Hotel of Concentrated Fragrance deserved its name only too well, and I admit I thought that it would myself, but beyond a faint aromatic odour it was quite devoid of smell, and I shall always remember with gratitude the kindness and comfort which I enjoyed there. Like most Chinese buildings, it was not a single house, but a series of partially covered courts divided from one another by pavilions. Along the side ran a continuous passage, opening into these courts, not by ordinary doors, but by perfectly round apertures, which produced a very strange effect. The three pavilions for the reception of guests were composed almost entirely of glass, so that everybody could see what everybody else was eating or doing. Round the courts were ranged rows of wine-jars, some white, some red, bearing great seals on their mouths. Another method of preserving and carrying wine is to put it in wicker-work baskets lined with oiled paper. The paper is tough and watertight, but the European mind cannot get over the oddity of carrying liquid in a basket.

Preparations were being made for a dinner-party when I arrived, and I had to wait for my own repast ; but the transparency of the pavilions enabled me to pass the time by watching all the details of a Chinese entertainment. It was apparently a birthday-party, and the preliminary ceremonies were of a quasi-religious character. Paper figures of strange animals were burnt in a brazier, and the company prostrated themselves before a table bearing fruit and red candles, which seemed to serve the double

purpose of a sideboard and altar. But these solemn proceedings did not last long, and the entertainment soon became free and easy. The guests threw off their upper garments, and some sat naked to the waist. The noise of loud and general conversation was increased by a game called Chai mui, resembling the classical *micare digitis*, about which one used to be asked questions in scholarship papers. Two guests look one another in the face, so as not to see their hands, and at the same time each extends as many fingers as he chooses and shouts out what he thinks is the total number extended by both himself and his adversary. Whenever anyone guesses rightly, the opponent has to stand drinks.

My own meal, when at last ready, proved to be a sumptuous affair, and was, I think, largely composed of the leavings of the birthday-table. Everybody in the hotel who was not engaged at that festivity came to watch me eat, and many benevolent persons, seeing my very imperfect control of the chop-sticks, insisted on stuffing the food into my mouth with their fingers. The table was covered with about twenty little plates or saucers, mostly containing rice, with shreds of chicken, fish, or duck. Besides this there were sauces innumerable, and a dish of eggs which did not at first inspire confidence, for the yolk was black, and what should have been the white was yellow. However, I was made to eat them, and found them to be like all the rest of the dinner—excellent. On this and on all other occasions when I have tried Chinese cuisine, I have found it very good; but it is full of surprises, and lest the element of topsy-turviness should be lacking, a meal generally terminates with a dish of soup.

VII

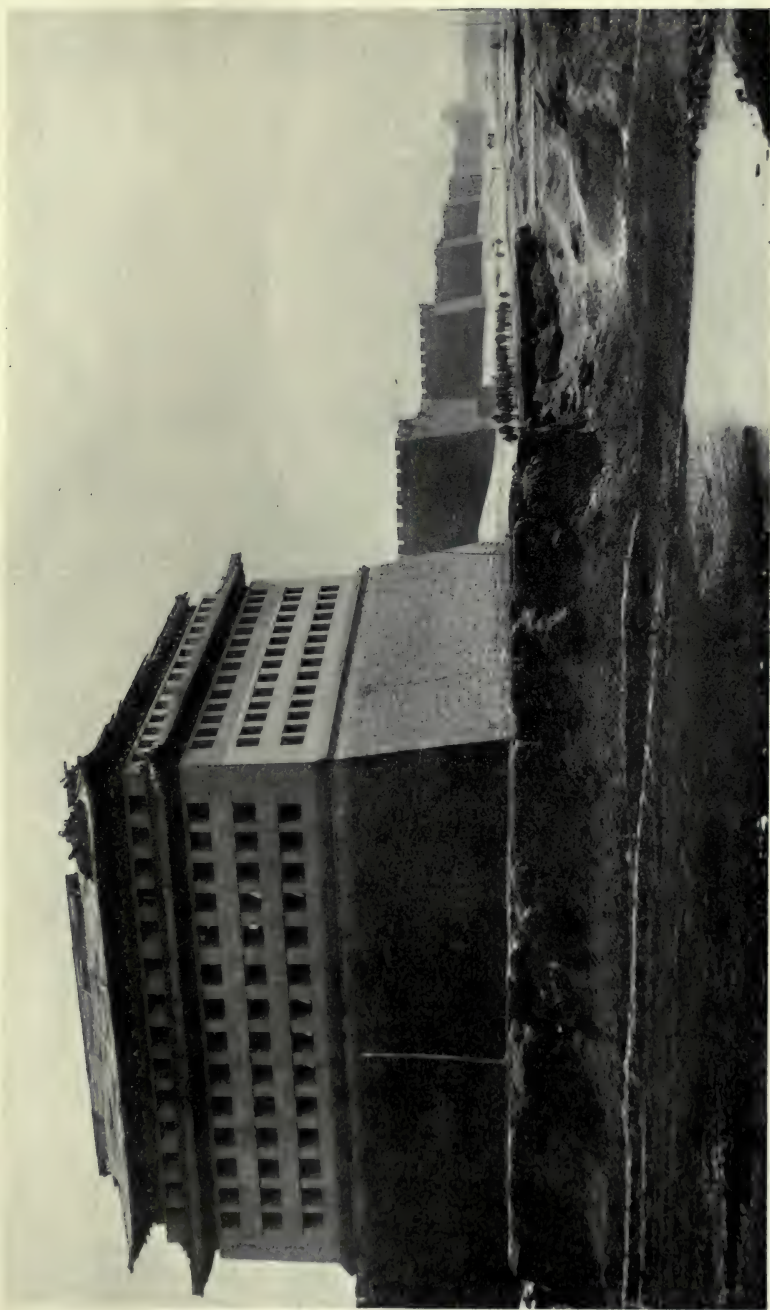
PEKING

THOSE who knew Peking some years ago tell those who visit it now for the first time that what they see nowadays is a new city—reformed, drained, chastised, and europeanized—and not the old Peking, whose dirt and magnificence alike defied description. But even in these degenerate days those who are acquainted only with the cities of the Near and Middle East—such as Constantinople, Cairo, Samarcand, and Delhi—will stand agape with astonishment when they first see Peking—its walls, its tiles, its gilding, its ruins, and its filth. In no city of the world is there so much gold and bright colour to be seen. Its distribution is not uniform, for there are plenty of sombre alleys; but in most of the mercantile quarters the shops are adorned with four gilt dragons, which stretch out their necks over the entrances; the sides of the houses are covered with trellis-work, which is sometimes gilt and sometimes painted vermilion, while red, blue, green, and yellow are scattered with a lavish hand on walls and roof. The colour of a roof, however, is a matter of rank, not of taste; and yellow tiles, though common, are always a sign that the building they cover is an imperial resi-

dence or a temple founded by an emperor. Yet, in spite of modern improvements, this blaze of colour rises literally out of the mire. Dunghills are piled up against the golden shops, and the vermilion trellis-work may be hidden by miserable hovels erected a foot from it.

Peking is not like Canton or the ports of southern China. It has something that suggests the cities and markets of Central Asia, the dust and solitude of the steppes. Even in the broad and bustling thoroughfares one has this feeling of loneliness and great space, where men may pass and wander and remain unknown; but it is even stranger to meet a string of camels in a deserted street near the walls, or to find in the centre of the city a desolate field and a huge ditch, which was once a lake or part of a canal, but is now a series of stagnant pools, half overgrown with shrubs.

Of all the monuments of Peking, none is more remarkable than the wall which surrounds it. This rampart is a triumph of architecture in its own way, for in all dimensions except length it excels the Great Wall of China itself. It is supported at regular intervals by buttresses, and over the gates which pierce it, and in other places, are erected square towers with two or three curved roofs and rows of windowless apertures—strange buildings, of little use in either peace or war, that seem to watch the city with mistrustful, hostile eyes. Peking, like Stamboul, has shrunk, and the outermost quarters are in many places depopulated. But it is not so much this which makes the wall look lonely as its massive proportions and simplicity. It has no kinship with the tiled and gilded pagodas, but



THE WALLS OF PEKING.

seems to be the handiwork of another race: a monument of some bygone military system, battered by newer artillery and no longer impregnable, but still imposing, as it coils round the city like some wounded leviathan—lonely, sullen, and implacable.

Peking is a city of horsemen. In a street of Canton a horse would be very like a bull in a china-shop, but here riders perched on high saddles may be seen everywhere, as well as carriages and strings of horses laden with burdens. When traffic is regulated at all, the arrangement is the opposite of ours. Horses and vehicles go at the side of the road, foot passengers in the middle. It is said that the Manchu pigtail is an imitation of the horse's tail, worn as a sign of respect to the animal to which they owe so much; and the acknowledgment, if true, is merited, for the conquests of both the Mongols and Manchus were undoubtedly due to their efficiency as cavalry. A large part of the population of Peking is composed of these races. It is not always easy to tell a Manchu from a Chinaman, though they have generally harder and duller faces; but the women can be recognized at once by their feet, which are not cramped, but are allowed to grow naturally. They are also taller and more stoutly built than the Chinese women, and show in their bearing that independence which they are said to enjoy in their family circles. It is to this race that belongs that formidable old lady, the Empress Dowager—'Old Aunt Buddha,' as she is irreverently termed in Chinese slang.

If one looks at Peking from an eminence—say the Drum Tower in the north of the city—one sees at once that it is not a collection of houses which has gradually grown up, but a camp laid out by imperia

order. To the south lies the Chinese town ; to the north of it are three cities, each with its own wall, one inside the other like boxes in a puzzle. The innermost is the Forbidden Red City, or imperial palace ; round this lies the Imperial City, inhabited chiefly by the dependents of the palace ; and round the Imperial City, in its turn, lies the Tartar City, still called in Mongol Khambalu, the Cambaluc of Marco Polo. An imperial taste for splendid buildings is also evident. The Mongol and Manchu could not conquer the inveterate Chinese habit of filling a park with pavilions or shrines instead of building one large castle or temple, but they managed to break away from the monotony of recurved roofs, as a goodly prospect of towers and pinnacles bears witness. The religious architecture of Peking is much more Indian than that of southern China, for the Mongols brought with them the Lamaistic form of Buddhism, which is more under Indian influences than other sects of the same religion which have developed in China. The Manchus evidently do not share Chinese indifference to overcrowding. Every house has a courtyard, with at least one tree growing in it, and hence, when one looks down on the city in summer, it seems half buried in a forest. Through it run at intervals broad roads, spanned here and there by ornamental arches ; and there are numerous empty spaces corresponding to the squares or parks of European towns.

As in other parts of China, one is struck with the number of placards and the amount of writing to be seen in the streets. This wall literature is really a form of popular journalism. The placards contain official notices, advertisements rivalling in their



VIEW FROM THE ALTAR OF HEAVEN, PEKING.

variety and enthusiasm the productions of British soap-makers, private notices like the agony column, and all manner of appeals to the public on religious, moral, and political questions. It was in this way that the cause of the Boxers was advocated, and that the government showed its approval or disapproval of their doings. Fans are another means of disseminating news and ideas. It is said that cheap fans bearing pictures of massacres of Europeans were widely circulated in order to stir the people to further bloodshed.

The buildings of Peking, when examined in detail, do not belie the promise made by their distant prospect; but, whether temples, towers, or pavilions, they all seem deserted and sinking into decay. Similar buildings in Japan are usually full of native visitors, who are perhaps sightseers rather than pilgrims; but, at any rate, their presence ensures that ancient monuments are kept in good condition. But in Peking this spirit is totally absent; temples are visited only when a fair is held in them. On other days, unless there happens to be a monastery attached, the doors are closed, and it may be hard to get in. No repairs are made—not even those demanded by safety. The galleries of the Drum Tower mentioned above threaten speedy collapse. The best-preserved edifice is, perhaps, the Temple of Confucius, near the northern wall, a beautiful spot where the marble courts and shady trees create an academic calm not unworthy of the philosopher who said: ‘Reading without thinking is labour lost; thinking without reading is dangerous.’ A fine marble staircase leads up to the shrine. Steps for mortal feet are cut only at the sides. The middle

part, richly carved with dragons, is reserved for the use of spirits. Inside the decoration is red and gold, but there are few ornaments except inscriptions, and no images at all. Behind the altar is merely a tablet of vermilion lacquer, bearing in golden characters the name of Confucius, and above is an inscription in four large characters, 'The model teacher of ten thousand ages,' drawn by the Emperor K'ang-Hsi himself. Chinese writing is almost a branch of painting, and cannot be compared with our western scribbling. The imperial family have always been proud of their skill in calligraphy, and the present Empress Dowager, in spite of her advanced age, is still renowned for the firm and artistic touch with which she draws gigantic hieroglyphics. In the side halls by the principal gateway are preserved the oldest known monuments of Chinese civilization—ten stone drums, probably made about 1000 B.C., which were discovered in the province of Shensi in the seventh century of this era. On them are inscribed ten odes, in archaic Chinese characters, describing a hunting expedition.

Considering the antiquity of China, it is remarkable how few fragments of ancient building or sculpture have been preserved. With the exception of these drums, no monuments have been discovered, to the best of my belief, earlier than the first century B.C. The habit of building in wood is, of course, the cause of the loss, but it is probable that remains will some day be found underground near the course of the Hwang-Ho and the Wei River, which is known to be the line above which the Chinese advanced from the west. Though the Chinese allow their buildings to go to ruin, it must be said to their honour that

they are zealous in preserving ancient relics, and even write very excellent and learned books about them.

More remarkable than the Temple of Confucius, though perhaps not more beautiful, is the enclosure in the south of the city known as the Temple or Altar of Heaven, where the Emperor offers annual sacrifices to Heaven and his ancestors. It is a park of cypress-trees and acacias, in which are kept the oxen used for sacrifices. One is first shown the Hall of Fasting, where the Emperor spends the night before the ceremony, which takes place at dawn. It is, as befits its purpose, artistically ascetic, and contains only a throne and a magnificently carved screen. A little further on is another group of buildings, where the sacrifice is offered. The most southerly of them is a white marble platform, rising in three terraces, and surrounded by three balustrades. The offerings are actually burnt in a furnace faced with green tiles, which stands a little way off, but this platform is generally called the altar. It is so arranged that when the Emperor kneels in the middle he is surrounded by nine concentric circles, and is, so to speak, the centre of the universe, with only heaven above him. Before him to the north extends a line of buildings, some of white marble, some red, some gilded, terminating in another marble platform, on which rises the Temple of Prayer for Grain*—a tower-like structure, with three roofs of deep bright blue. All this is set against the dull green of the surrounding trees, and it would be difficult to find anywhere a more gorgeous harmony of colour.

* More accurately, the Temple of Prayer for a (Good) Year.

And yet when one looks at these buildings, the impression which overpowers all others is not their beauty, but the marks of neglect and decay. Grass and small shrubs grow between the stones of the marble platforms and on the blue roofs. The paths are almost obliterated by weeds; the courtyards look like meadows. The marble is chipped, the tiles broken, the red wooden pillars and walls are cracked and scratched. Indeed, the whole scene suggests not so much a neglected modern building as a well-preserved old building overgrown by a jungle. When the Emperor comes, an effort, no doubt, is made to set the place in order, but I am told that they merely cut off the plants growing between the stones, and do not take the trouble to uproot them.

It might naturally be supposed that this neglect springs from a total indifference to the buildings and the ceremonies performed in them, but that is not so. The Temple of Prayer for Grain was rebuilt about twelve years ago at a cost of millions, and with great artistic skill. The cause is rather the peculiar attitude of the Chinese mind to national questions, particularly such as concern the Court, and is of wide application. It seems natural that the Temple of Heaven should be regarded as a national institution, like Westminster Abbey or the Shrines of Ise in Japan. But such an idea never enters a Chinaman's head. In his opinion, it is the Emperor's business to look after the place, and only European tourists seem to think of visiting it. And the Emperor—or, rather, his Court—do no more than is necessary for their own annual ceremonies; and as these take place at night or at the first break of day, many imperfec-



TEMPLE OF PRAYER FOR GRAIN, PEKING.

tions pass unnoticed. If as a result of all this a building collapses, it will, if indispensable, be replaced regardless of cost ; and though the Chinese are excellent men of business, it will not occur to anyone that it would have been cheaper to have averted the disaster by using ordinary care.

VIII

EDUCATION AND THE ARMY

THERE is great talk in China at present of reforms and representative government. Boards and Commissioners are appointed to study foreign constitutions, armies, and systems of education. Every one is reporting on something or other, and the officials of the empire seem likely to turn into living Blue books. I am not sure that all this indicates a real desire to do anything, for I have been an official myself, and I know that the object of asking for a report on a question is generally to get rid of it. When I was a member of the British Embassy at Constantinople, it was the custom to refer troublesome matters, whenever it was possible, to His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad. It looked as if a thorough inquiry was being instituted, and one was certain to hear no more of the business for two months at least. I suspect that the Dowager Empress has somewhat similar motives when she sends liberal-minded officials to Europe to make a careful and prolonged study of our institutions.

There is, however, no doubt that a conviction is spreading, or has spread, all over China that the empire in its present state cannot cope with Europeans, and that radical changes are imperative for

the national safety. Such changes are now being made in more than one sphere, and are likely to bear more solid fruit than the talk about Parliaments. One important aspect of the national life which is being revolutionized is education. The outward sign of this is the number of schoolboys in khaki suits and European caps with peaks in front, and their lessons have altered with their costume. This means even more in China than it would elsewhere. The old system of examinations was the embodiment of Chinese respect for the classics and antiquity. It was the means by which the whole public service was recruited, and the only avenue to rank and position. It has now been abolished, and apparently come to an end without protest or difficulty. It is true that the change was mere abolition, which is easier than the introduction of unwelcome novelties, but still it shows that the Chinese are capable of giving up their most venerable ideals and deep-rooted prejudices.

There are now three educational establishments bearing the name of University—at Peking, Tientsin, and Tai-yuan-fu; but though a new curriculum of teaching is in force, no definite decision seems to have yet been taken as to what shall replace the old examinations. It is not to be expected or wished that the principle of appointing officers according to the merit shown in examinations should be abandoned, for it is ingrained in the Chinese character and by no means an evil. But at present the examination halls are empty and the temples of Confucius are deserted; for their worshippers used to be composed mainly of those who came to pray for success in the schools or to offer thanks for obtaining a degree. We have no right to laugh

at the old Chinese curriculum. It was exclusively literary, and not unlike the training in Latin verse which formed so large a part of our fathers' education, but it had at least the merit of being in Chinese and not in a dead language.

Since the above was written the newspapers report that imperial edicts have been issued declaring that the old Confucian learning is the fundamental factor in education, and that western knowledge is only auxiliary to it; also raising Confucius to an equal rank with heaven and earth. This latter order is a striking example of Chinese ideas as to the relations between the State and religion, but the spirit of the edicts seems sensible enough. What the patriotic Chinese want is not European civilization, but Chinese civilization vivified by adaptations of European methods; and if you must put new wine into old bottles, you may reasonably protect the bottles by every means within your power, including deification.

We here see signs of a struggle between reformers and conservatives which makes the educational code chaotic and self-contradictory. But progress is being made. The modern course of studies includes mathematics, geography, anatomy, and, in some cases, English. In all the schools which I visited wall-maps and large diagrams of the human body were conspicuous. It is a right instinct which has led to this selection, for the great fault of the Chinese mind is its proclivity to gross superstitions, which give themselves the airs of science, though ignoring all the facts of the subject with which they profess to deal. Such false sciences are Chinese medicine, and, above all, Fêng Shui, or geomancy—the science

of lucky and unlucky sites. It is not too much to say that the ordinary Chinaman takes magic for science, and science for magic. The selection of an auspicious site for a grave, in accordance with certain laws as to slopes, levels, watercourses, and wind, seems to him an operation as serious and mathematically certain as the calculation of an eclipse. But if Europeans predict from an examination of the soil that minerals will be found in a certain district, he believes that they have magic spectacles which enable them to see underground. Until this mental vice is altered, much progress in any direction is clearly impossible. It seems to affect every department of Chinese life except business. In money matters there is no superstition or disregard of facts.

An interesting feature in this educational movement is that about 13,000 Chinese students are being trained in Japan, partly at the expense of the Chinese Government. The professors of the Tokyo University say that they are intelligent and anxious to learn; but as they mostly belong to well-to-do families, they have a superfluity of money, and are inclined to dissipation. The Chinese, on the other hand, complain that they learn more than was bargained for, and come back not merely advanced Radicals, but members of secret political societies. It is thought that the experiment will be discontinued as far as Japan is concerned, and that the next batch of students will be distributed in various European countries.

It is remarkable, too, how many temples in China are being turned into schools and lecture-halls. The popular conscience is not at all scandalized by this use of sacred buildings, which by common custom

are used as guest-houses. Lectures seem to appeal to the Chinese in much the same way as theatres, and the entertainment is conducted in somewhat the same style. It consists of a number of short discourses lasting from ten to twenty minutes, often illustrated by lantern slides or cinematographs. Tea is handed round in the intervals. A lecture which I attended was densely crowded. We began with something light to start us cheerfully on our way—namely, a brief discourse on flying-machines, in which the orator said that the wings of his eloquence, like those of the engines he described, were not strong enough for a long flight, which was considered a very well-turned phrase. Then came a more serious oration on the constitution of the United States, illustrated by pictures of President Roosevelt and prominent citizens, which were received with roars of laughter and loud personal criticisms. The third item was a lecture on European systems of insurance—a dry subject, but listened to with apparent interest.

The educational movement has a moral side also, particularly as regards opium-smoking. Public opinion is divided on this point much as about drinking spirits in Europe. There is a sincere desire for the prohibition of vice, counteracted by a tendency to condone or defend moderate indulgence, which needs no explanation. The abolition of opium-smoking forms part of the programme of most reformers, and the question has now been taken up in imperial edicts. A grave responsibility would be incurred by any European country which should insist on the right to import opium, but there is some reason to fear that the Chinese Government

will merely stop the importation of the drug, and not its cultivation, in China.

The other most noticeable change is the growth of a military spirit and the improvement in the training and equipment of the troops. The Chinese, as opposed to their Manchu and Mongol conquerors, are not a military nation, and it is rather curious that *pékin* should have come to be used in French for a civilian or civilian attire. There is no military aristocracy, no glamour about the profession of arms, and no fighting spirit. Though the Manchus were a warlike race, in this, as in other matters, Chinese ideas have gained the upper hand, and the military class have had to accept the position which popular sentiment assigned to them. But in the last few years the Chinese have come to understand that they must be a military nation if they are to be an independent nation. The common sense of Confucius taught that it is unworthy of a civilized people to keep a standing army and expend enormous sums on a machine which is only rarely used; but now all Europe cries in many languages, 'If you don't learn how to fight, I'll eat you up.' That is the real gospel of the west. The Far East does not take Christian missions very seriously. It has come to the not altogether unnatural conclusion that Christianity is a part of European politics, not a detached system, like Buddhism. But it does believe the Powers of Europe when their every action says, 'As long as we exist, there shall be no safety in the world for unarmed nations,' and it is putting the message into practice.

The old Chinese troops were incredibly bad. I remember seeing a detachment in Central Asia,

near Kashgar, about fifteen years ago, effete and weakly in physique, without discipline, and carrying queer medieval weapons: some had matchlocks and some battle-axes, but banners were even more numerous than arms. The examinations for the army were equally antiquated, for the candidates were selected according to their skill in archery. Even in this the standard was not very high. At least, there is a story of a general who, in an hour of peril, invoked the aid of the God of War. In response to his prayers a very small and rotund deity appeared, who introduced himself as the Target God. The God of War was too busy to attend, he said, so he had come on account of the peculiar esteem he had for the general. The general asked how he had been so fortunate as to secure this good opinion, for he knew he was not thought much of in military circles. 'In the days when you practised archery,' replied the Target God, 'you never once hurt me, and I have always been grateful to you.'

But the old state of things is rapidly passing away. In most large towns soldiers may be seen in business-like khaki uniforms, copied from the Japanese, with modern arms and accoutrements, but with more private judgment in the matter of hats than military men are wont to allow. The weak point of the new army would seem to be a want of uniformity and centralization. The troops are practically raised and armed by the viceroys, and the result depends on each viceroy's tastes and willingness to spend money. Hence most paper statistics are worthless, for a statement of mere numbers does not show how many of the troops are a mob

and how many trained men. A recent telegram from Peking contained a most important announcement as to the gradual nationalization of the army. Yuan-Shih-Kai, the Viceroy of Tientsin, is said to have surrendered much of his direct control over the troops in his provinces, retaining only two divisions under his own orders, and handing over the rest to the Minister of War. Other reforms, such as an army audit and a central clothing department, are promised, and it would seem that real progress is being made in the creation of a national army. Unfortunately, an apprehension is felt that under the new system pay may be allowed to fall into arrears. That apprehension is characteristic of China. One of the secrets of Yuan-Shih-Kai's success was his system of prompt payment, due to the fact that he had a special and somewhat unusual interest in his troops. When that special interest ceases to exist, when the troops are the hobby of no one in particular, but merely a part of the great imperial establishment, it will be to the Chinese mind very extraordinary if their pay is issued regularly. It was mentioned as a wonderful sign of the times that Yuan-Shih-Kai had appeared in a military uniform, such a costume being, according to old-fashioned notions, almost a disgrace for a high official. Some young officers are now asking if they shall not cut off their pigtails, which certainly contrast somewhat oddly with their European uniforms, and the question is not unimportant, for it shows a readiness to abandon a national custom which might not have been expected.

Though I think that a heavy moral responsibility rests with Europe for forcing militarism on a peaceful

people, yet I gladly admit that there is at least one good feature in the military movement—namely, that it is creating a supply of properly trained doctors, and thus beginning to relieve the Chinese of that farrago of superstitious twaddle which has masqueraded among them as the science of medicine. The manual of medical jurisprudence at present in use by coroners and others was composed in the thirteenth century, and teaches such arts as how to determine the relationship of two people by mixing drops of their blood and watching how the fluid behaves.

Those who are best acquainted with the East are generally of opinion that no great change ever happens there; that, though disasters are annually prophesied, the creaking machine still goes on, and neither collapses nor is improved. Still, I think that China is on the eve of great changes, though how great or how rapid they may prove I do not presume to foreshadow. The Chinese are not like the Mohammedan races of the Nearer East, who are mostly warriors, with an ingrained hatred of European civilization. On the contrary, they are a nation of merchants, with a keen eye to business, and in many ways of great pliancy and adaptability. Their aversion to foreign methods is due to their long isolation, and to the fact that until the arrival of Europeans they were always in contact with inferior races. Whatever were the fortunes of war with the various Tartar invaders, whether they conquered or were conquered, Chinese civilization assimilated them, and was not appreciably altered by Mongol or Manchu institutions. China, as the proverb says, is a sea which salts all the rivers that

flow into it. But now that they realize their own weakness, as they evidently do, in two such important matters as education and the army, there is no reason why their intelligence and business capacity should not effect a thorough reorganization. The example of Japan should, perhaps, be cited with caution, for the political conditions of the two countries are, and always have been, very different. Still, it does justify one in thinking that the nations of the Far East are capable of passing through chrysalis periods of suspended activity and then expanding into a new and different life.

But I would not wish to leave the impression that I see a clear road open for progress and reform in China. On the contrary, I foresee all sorts of difficulties arising out of the political conditions of this singular country, on which I will touch in my next letter; but apart from that, the temper of the Chinese, their overwhelming conceit and self-complacency, is not reassuring. They admit at last that they must learn from Europe, but they will probably soon think themselves perfect at their lesson, and not be willing to follow the patient and thorough method of the Japanese. Nothing in the history of Japan strikes me more than the thoroughness of the training and preparation which they imposed on themselves, and the way they first tried their hand at war with China, and then, when they knew their strength by practice, engaged in the contest with Russia.

IX

CHINESE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS PROSPECTS

IN my last letter I spoke about the growing feeling in China that changes are necessary, but also indicated that, though the temper of the people is on the whole favourable to reform, the path of the reformer is by no means smooth and easy. It is specially hard to forecast the future, for the conditions which influence it may themselves be altered. For instance, will the present dynasty continue? Chinese ideas of loyalty are peculiar, and have absolutely nothing in common with the Japanese and Turkish notion of obedience due to a particular house. On the contrary, there have been about twenty dynasties since the Christian era, and there is no pretence of continuity about the succession. If a sovereign can seize the imperial throne by successful war, or any other means, he will be obeyed by the people as long as his rule gives satisfaction, for it is a maxim that a ruler has duties which he must perform, as much as rights which he can enforce. It is written in the classics that emperors who lose the confidence of the people lose the empire, and all the youth of China learn this saying. Now, it cannot be denied that there is at present considerable

dissatisfaction with the Manchu dynasty. It is true that the difference between Manchu and Chinese has ceased to be acute, and that the court very wisely do what they can to minimize it in such ways as opening to Chinese posts formerly reserved for Manchus only. Still, there is a general feeling that the present rulers are not Chinese, and, further, that they have not managed the business of ruling very well. There have been several prophecies of the downfall of the dynasty, which has already lasted 262 years, the life of the longest dynasties since the Christian era being about 300.

We do right to emphasize the conservatism of the Chinese, their veneration for the past, and their conviction that modern foreign inventions cannot possibly be superior to the wisdom of their ancestors. But, while remembering this, we must not lose sight of things like the Taiping rebellion. For fourteen years, from 1850 till 1864, an adventurer of indifferent character held the southern and central part of China against the government, and, but for the assistance rendered by Gordon, who trained and led the imperial troops, he would probably have succeeded in establishing himself as a rival of the Manchu dynasty, or, indeed, in ousting it altogether. It is noticeable, too, that this adventurer seems to have been inspired by some distorted form of Christianity, a fact which did not hinder the people from following him. No doubt in the Boxer movement the government saw a force which might probably be hostile to the dynasty, and took pains to conciliate it. China, according to the universal testimony of experts, is full of secret societies, which provide the necessary mechanism for hatching a conspiracy—

such as the celebrated Triad Society and the Ko-lao Society, which flourish although membership is a capital offence.

Another peculiarity of China is the loose cohesion between the different parts of the empire and the want of organic unity. The provinces are not limbs moved in co-ordination by one head. It is a commonplace that Asiatic despotisms when analyzed prove to be a democracy beneath an autocracy, but in China this seems to be admitted to some extent in theory as well as in practice. Thus Mencius, second only to Confucius in authority, said : ' The people are of the highest importance, the gods come second, the sovereign is of lesser weight.' And this is not a mere phrase. The government rarely try to force distasteful measures on the people, as is constantly done in Russia and Turkey ; and one not infrequently hears of public opinion asserting itself in such ways as successfully resisting an illegal tax or insisting on a case being retried if the popular conscience is not satisfied with a magistrate's decision.

The government of the provinces is supervised by viceroys, who generally have two provinces under them. Provided they send regular and sufficient money to Peking, they are allowed to be practically independent, and their prerogative includes such powers as raising troops and coining money, rights which the central authority reserves to itself in most parts of the world. Below the viceroys are governors of provinces, tao-tais (or chiefs of circumscriptions), and district magistrates. These last are the officials who are directly in contact with the people. It would appear that there are less than 1,500 of them

in the eighteen provinces, and if the population of those provinces is, as generally reckoned, about 380,000,000, it would seem that each magistrate has to look after something like 250,000 people. Magistrates have, however, as a rule, attached to them a number of candidates for employment, men who have passed the prescribed examinations, but are waiting for a vacancy. These, and still more the bands of runners and lictors who hang about a provincial Yamên, have a bad reputation for squeezing the people and doing little; but even if they offered effective assistance, government by so few hands would obviously be impossible without effective co-operation offered by the people themselves. The problem is solved by the institution of headmen, who are held responsible for the maintenance of peace and good order within their boroughs or villages, and who are allowed to take fees, though they receive no salaries. Also, guilds or societies, formed for benevolent or religious purposes, are numerous, and undertake a great deal of the work which in other countries would be dealt with by the sanitary or poor laws. Schools are usually established by voluntary associations.

The variety in customs which is inevitable in an empire of such large extent is naturally increased by this system of government. Not only do usages differ in various parts of China, but the spoken, though not the written, languages are different. There are at least eight so-called dialects, which are really languages as separate as French and Italian, though the peculiar system of writing obliterates the distinction between them. It may, indeed, be wondered that disruptive and centrifugal tendencies

have not been more prevalent in the empire, but on the whole the unity of manners and customs is greater than might be expected, and though it is often dangerous to attribute any particular custom to China generally, still, Chinamen from Canton, Sse-chuen, and Peking are undoubtedly all Chinamen, very different from other nations, and in comparison with those differences very like one another. The diversity of language is counterbalanced by the identity of writing, which annihilates not only space, but time ; for, since each Chinese hieroglyphic represents a single idea which the reader can pronounce according to the fashion of his dialect, it is possible to read the works of Confucius in modern Chinese, though had they been written alphabetically the language would be as different from modern Chinese as Anglo-Saxon is from modern English. Among an intensely literary people like the Chinese, who always honour scholarship, even if they do not possess it, the existence of a common writing and a common literature, religious as well as secular, is a matter of no little moment. Also, there are no laws restricting movement in China. Passports are unknown, and people can and do go wherever they please in pursuit of their business. Then, again, it is a rule of Chinese administrations that an official can never be employed in his own province, but must always serve in one of which he is not a native. This naturally renders home rule aspirations impossible, and familiarizes people with the idea that government is not provincial.

Hence China presents the spectacle of an immense mass of humanity held together by very loose

political ties, but cemented by common customs and traditions to which the people are deeply attached. This feeling is intense and bred in the bone. So far, therefore, it is superior to any transitory effervescence of national sentiment. But it seems wanting in passion. It has not the glow of Japanese patriotism or of Mohammedan fanaticism. Hence, although we find Chinese national sentiment performing prodigies of prejudice, we do not find it performing prodigies of valour. More than this, pecuniary considerations may overcome national scruples—at any rate, if the issue is not very direct. In 1900, Chinese coolies from Shantung were perfectly ready to work for the Allies, and it is said that the same thing happened in 1860. If one considers all this—the occurrence of such movements as the Taiping rebellion, the loose system of government, and the readiness to help other nations who are fighting against China—it is plain that there is something more than conservatism in the Chinese character.

On the other hand, it is clear that if in some ways contact with foreigners acts as a disintegrating force, it has sometimes the opposite effect, and calls into operation the national power of combination into guilds or societies for a particular object. A remarkable instance of this is the recent boycott of American goods, which extended from Canton certainly as far north as Suchow, and perhaps further. The United States Government had enacted severe regulations restricting the immigration of Chinese into California, and these regulations were harshly enforced, which was not strictly reasonable, since the right of American citizens to enter China was main-

tained. Ten years ago such proceedings would have passed unnoticed, for it is not the way of the Chinese Government to protect the interests of its subjects abroad. But on this occasion the populace took up the matter, doubtless on suggestion, and refused to buy American goods until an amelioration of the obnoxious rules was promised.

One cannot help fearing that the system of bribery universal in China may do much mischief at the present crisis. The custom is universal and not denied, though, of course, it would not be manners to mention it. A viceroy actually receives about £1,300 a year, whereas his out-of-pocket expenses probably amount to between £10,000 and £15,000. The objection to the system does not lie mainly in its injustice. The value of every office, inclusive of these perquisites, is accurately known, and an official who should try to extort more than custom authorizes would soon find himself in trouble. A more insidious evil is that every transaction in which an official engages is regarded by him as primarily a means of making money. Hence viceroys look to the minting of coins and equipment of troops as methods for filling their pockets, and there is a great danger—nay, almost a certainty—that when they have to provide anything at the public expense, all concerned will endeavour to take their commission not only by overcharging, but by buying inferior articles which are not worth the price nominally paid. Connected with this is the Chinese idea of 'face,' or 'saving face,' which means that in public as well as in private life a disaster or disgrace can be removed by an explanation which is transparently untrue, but which makes appeal to

some traditional sentiment, and is accepted by everybody as a decent fiction. Thus, after the Boxer troubles the Emperor was praised for his filial piety, because, when he might (as was assumed) have continued a successful contest, he preferred to conclude peace and spare his elderly aunt the trouble of moving from one palace to another. After the Japanese war many parts of China remained in ignorance of the defeat, and were under the impression that Japan had been beaten.

At present the Japanese clearly desire to undertake the political and military education of China, both by receiving Chinese students in Japan and by training the army and navy in China. Their efforts have met with considerable success, and there are many Japanese instructors, both in schools and various branches of the public service. Japanese journals complacently state that the mission of Japan is to civilize not only China, but Asia, and point to the employment of Japanese in Siam. They clearly have many advantages which Europeans can never obtain. They understand the Chinese character better, and the masticated food which they serve out is more digestible to the Chinese stomach than crude European viands. But, on the other hand, the Chinese have for many centuries maintained towards the Japanese an attitude of superiority—an attitude founded on no substantial claim, no doubt, but still part of the national character. It is not, therefore, likely that anything like patronage on the part of the Japanese will be agreeable to them.

X

CHINESE LITERATURE

It is not surprising that the literature of the Far East has inspired less interest and admiration than its art. Some study is necessary even to understand it, and to appreciate it requires considerable training and sympathy with native ideas. Yet some acquaintance with it is imperative for every one who would have a just idea of Chinese and Japanese life. China is the most literary country in the world. Education, consisting in a knowledge of the Confucian classics as tested by competitive examinations, has been hitherto the only means of obtaining office and rank. Probably in no other part of the world do people write so much, or strive so generally to make what they write conform to their canons of style. In Japan the ancient literature is slighter and less influential, but the output of books and written matter is large, and literary style is sought after and appreciated.

Whatever opinion one may form of the merits of ancient Chinese literature, there can be no doubt of the influence which it has exerted in eastern Asia. Not only in China proper, but in Korea, Annam, Cochin China, and to a considerable extent in Japan, it has not only afforded almost the only intellectual

pabulum of the population (for Buddhist literature is little read except by priests), but has also penetrated and coloured the whole life of the official classes and the administration of the state in an unusual manner. Now, the population of China, including the outlying territories, is reckoned at 400,000,000 at least, and 30,000,000 more may be added for Korea and Indo-China, whereas the population of all Europe is only 392,000,000. Hence it will be seen that, without counting Japan, this literature has influenced and moulded a larger number of the human race than all the literatures of Europe, including the Bible.

The classics, of which one hears so much in Chinese writings, consist of two collections, generally known as the four books and five classics. They consist chiefly of sayings attributed to Confucius and Mencius, and of various ancient writings collected by Confucius. This philosopher deliberately preferred to be an editor and arranger rather than an author, and the only work which has come down to us from his own pen is the 'Spring and Autumn Annals,' a very jejune chronicle of his native state of Lu. Still, as it was he who selected and arranged most of the ancient Chinese literature now in existence, he is entitled to the prominent place which he holds in the national esteem. The two chief compilations which he made are the Shu King, or book of history, a collection of historical documents; and the Shih King, or book of odes, an anthology of popular songs. The remaining two classics are the Book of Rites, a somewhat later compilation, incorporating the materials and opinions of Confucius, and the Book of Changes. I do not propose to enter into a discussion of this last work,

which is certainly the most mysterious offspring ever produced by human pen. Not only has nobody ever been able to translate it to the satisfaction of anybody else (that sort of thing is not uncommon among sinologues), but there is not even an approximate agreement as to what it is about. One authority thinks it is a moral treatise, a second an almanack, a third a dictionary of Chinese and some prehistoric tongue. The Chinese themselves simply venerate it, and feel like the old Scotch lady who was asked if she had understood the minister's somewhat metaphysical sermon: 'Hech, sirs! I would na presume.'

This literature has not found much favour or admiration in Europe. It consists partly of moral sentiments enunciated in a style which makes them seem platitudes, and partly of somewhat trivial details respecting the life of the ancient sages, such as that Confucius always had ginger on his table, and wore a nightshirt half as long again as his body. Also, the observance of propriety, etiquette, and ceremony is continually enjoined in a manner which seems formal and pedantic. But it must be remembered that most of these maxims were uttered at a time when they were not commonplaces, but rather paradoxes.

The object of Confucius was to introduce peace and order into the mob of contending Chinese states, torn by mutual quarrels and internal dissension, and though he did not achieve his object during his lifetime, still, during the two and a half millenniums which have elapsed since his death his system has had a success without parallel. Order and stability have been maintained in China some-

what at the expense of mobility and progress, but the ideals and maxims of the classics are excellent in their essence, and perhaps would commend themselves more to Anglo-Saxon readers if they were differently translated. Thus the phrase 'The superior man'—the Confucian ideal character—has something priggish about it, but in general idea, and even in many details, the Chinese words which it renders correspond to 'gentleman.'

Professor Giles somewhere tells a story of a Cambridge Don who asked him if the Chinese had 'anything in the nature of poetry.' He justly replied by quoting a question once addressed to him by a Mandarin—'Are books known in your honourable country?' He might also have replied that the Emperor Ch'ien Lung wrote 33,950 pieces in 'the nature of poetry,' and has apparently inspired the present Mikado of Japan, who was announced some time ago to have composed 27,000. There is no stopping a literary emperor; but in the case of ordinary Chinese no doubt the public and the publishers enforce some kind of limit, and poems, though numerous, are generally short. None consist of more than a few hundred lines, compositions like the Indian and Greek Epics being entirely unknown; and in modern times twelve lines has come to be regarded as the model length.

Poems of four lines, if artistically constructed, are also much admired, and are known as 'stop-shorts,' the idea being that they awake a train of thought which continues after the words cease, or outline a picture which the reader has to fill up. The beginning of such poems should be quiet and conventional, and only the fourth line should

reveal the real situation as a surprise. The following is considered a perfect example :

‘ The birds have all flown to their roost in the tree :
 The last cloud has just floated lazily by :
 But we never tire of each other, not we,
 As we sit there together, the mountains and I.’

(*Trans. Giles.*)

These lines are by Li-Po, perhaps the most famous of Chinese poets, who lived under the T‘ang dynasty (A.D. 600 to 900), which was for poetry the Augustan age. The older productions, such as the classical odes, though interesting on account of their age and the simple vigour of their language, seem—at any rate, to foreigners—somewhat too primitive to deserve the high value which the Chinese attach to them ; and poems written after the T‘ang, composed as they are in archaic language and with archaic rhymes, tend to become more and more like the Latin verse written by modern scholars. The best Chinese poetry has something about it which recalls Horace—the same ease and accuracy of expression, resulting from careful workmanship and long polish, and a love of court life and the beauties of nature judiciously blended. One may add, too, that it is very bacchanalian. Most Chinese poets have sung the praises of the wine-cup, and Li-Po, after writing a poem in which he described himself as carousing with the moon, got drowned in a river while attempting to embrace the reflection of his boon companion.

It will have already dawned upon the reader that the Chinese, though their literature is strictly indigenous and owes hardly anything to foreign influences, are not so much creative as critical, editorial, and bookish. They excel in those forms

of writing which depend upon treating everyday themes with a literary touch, such as essays and letters intended for publication. Essays of all lengths and on all sorts of subjects have been published in abundance for the last 1,200 years, and the composition of one has always been a principal part of the official examinations. 'We like our own compositions, but other men's wives,' says a proverb, which sounds as if it ought to be French, and testifies to the prevalence of authorship, if not of morality. One finds *littérateurs* writing with a pleasant vein of humour, as well as with a lightness and sureness of touch most unusual in Asia, on such subjects as book-collecting, gardening, and cookery. Yüan Mei, a literary epicure of the eighteenth century, treated this last subject with a delicacy and dignity worthy of Brillat-Savarin. More extraordinary in point of time is Chwang Tsü, a brilliant writer of the fourth century B.C., whose paradoxical and somewhat flippant style has deprived him of the place in the Chinese canon which his literary gifts certainly deserve.

If Chinese poems are short, Chinese novels are immensely long. They resemble, not simple novels, but the works of those French novelists who record in a series of tales the fortunes of an entire family. Some are historical, some supernatural, some pictures of life and manners. One of the most popular and still generally read is the 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms,' a tale of war and adventure founded on the political events of the troublous times about the third century of this era. Equally celebrated is a massive work generally known as the 'Dream of the Red Chamber.' It is in twenty-

four volumes, and is pronounced by those who have read it to be excellent in its delineation of character, pictures of life, and in all things except its portentous length. More moderate in this respect, for it is only in four volumes, is a romance called Yü Chiao Li, which has been translated into French. It is a problem story. The hero falls in love with a beautiful poetess, and also with a most fascinating lady who masquerades in male attire, and steals his affections from the poetess while supposed to be merely his friend. Which shall the hero marry? One sees the alternatives before the European novelist — an accident, a suicide, a murder or violent row (though this highly probable result is not favoured by refined writers), a woman's sacrifice of herself, three people leading grey, dismal lives, with a tendency to drink or philanthropy. Which of these courses did the Chinese writer select? None of them. The hero simply married both the ladies, and they all lived happily ever after.

A Chinese friend once told me the plot of another novel which treated of the married state. It was a problem story, but it regarded conjugal relations in the light of circumstances which must be new and surprising to the most experienced reader of French novels. The hero, a magistrate in a certain provincial town, had to try a most baffling case, where there was a corpse with an agonized expression, which, along with other indications, pointed to murder, but no wounds and no evidence as to who was the culprit or how the deed was done. Now, in that town there was an excellent rule that if a magistrate could not discover a murderer he had to pay the penalty of the law in his own person,

and thus satisfy the demands of justice. So our friend lay awake half the night, and talked in his sleep the other half, until his wife insisted on knowing what it was all about. When she heard she simply asked, 'Did you look under the pigtail?' He had not, but when he did so he found there a large brass-headed nail driven into the brain of the deceased, and he soon proved that it was the unfortunate gentleman's wife who had dispatched him in this way.

The murderess was sliced to death by the slow process, and the magistrate was decorated with buttons and titles; all the province swore that there never was such a Daniel before. But when the first blush of triumph was over, he did not feel happy. It began with mere curiosity. How had his wife, whom (like most husbands) he had never thought particularly intelligent, solved as soon as she heard it a problem which had defied male ratiocination? She could not explain how she had been so successful, and curiosity passed into anxiety. He thought much and long, and the more he thought about it, the less he liked it, for she had been a widow when he married her. A terrible suspicion entered his mind, and allowed him no rest. At last, in the exercise of his authority, he contrived to have the body of his wife's first husband exhumed, and when with trembling fingers he felt under the pigtail, there he found, driven into the brain, a large brass-headed nail of precisely the same pattern as that which he had seen under the pigtail of the other corpse.

Now, here was the moral dilemma. Natural ties and gratitude for no ordinary service made the

idea of handing over his wife for trial seem monstrous. But on the other hand the claims of justice received no mean support from the vision of the brass-headed nail which might be threatening his own cranium at any moment. What did he do? The novelist apparently left the decision to the reader's moral sense. My friend seemed to think that justice and fear of the nail carried the day.

Big as are the novels of the Chinese, the real colossi of their literature are their dictionaries, compared to which the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' with all its supplements, is but as a pocket edition. The largest of all, said to have consisted of 22,877 volumes, was so gigantic that it never was printed, on account of the expense of cutting the wooden blocks used by Chinese printers. Three copies were made, which all fared badly, the last being burnt at Peking in the troubles of 1900. But those who like solid reading can still console themselves with a relatively brief treatise in 1,628 volumes. This work is one of the five thesauri published under the auspices of K'ang-Hsi, the second Emperor of the present dynasty. Besides general encyclopædias, there are numerous literary concordances and dictionaries, or alphabetical manuals for special sciences and arts such as medicine or agriculture. History also receives careful but prolix treatment.

The enormous extent and comprehensiveness of these dictionaries bear testimony to the love of information in China. If we take the great encyclopædias of the Ming dynasty, compiled at the end of the fourteenth century, or even those of K'ang-Hsi at the end of the seventeenth, it must be admitted that in bulk and completeness they are

superior to anything published in Europe at the same period, and, taking into account the mutual ignorance of the East and West, the Chinese works can hardly be said to be inferior in accuracy. For contemporary purposes all these books are, of course, useless except for historical and literary matters, the Chinese having hitherto obstinately shut their ears to the teaching of modern science, but there is no reason why, with their admirable industry and power of arrangement, they should not collect and codify the most recent information on all subjects.

XI

IN A JAPANESE TRAIN

A FOREIGNER'S first impression about life in Japan—not about scenery or buildings, but the practical details of everyday existence—is that most things are small. The railways, in particular, seem like toys, and when one is stowed away in a sleeping-car one feels that if one stretched out one's legs one would kick the end out. But an Englishman should remember that when one lands at Liverpool one finds the English train looks absurdly small compared with the gigantic locomotives and cars that ply on the other side. The little Japanese trains are serviceable and busy: they are generally full, and the expresses are often crowded with more passengers than can be seated. When this happens I observe that Japanese husbands sit down and let their wives stand. Very good for domestic discipline, no doubt. Chivalry does not flourish in Japan, but women are not secluded as in Mohammedan countries: they are treated somewhat like children and kept in their places, but not hidden. Even in the well-to-do classes women can travel alone, and in the lower classes the sexes associate with freedom, if not with equality.

It has been noticed that Japanese manners are

different on the railway from what they are elsewhere. The traditional maxims of etiquette never contemplated such surroundings, and for once conduct is regulated by human nature, not by precedent. This is perhaps why Japanese seem restless in trains. No philosopher thought of saying that the sage is never in a hurry to get out before the train stops. That so active a race should be restless is hardly surprising. Their calm and impassivity in ordinary social intercourse is the result of training, not of temperament. In a train they are for ever opening and shutting the windows and drawing the blinds up or down. If they have room they walk about, lie down, or spread out repasts of many cups and dishes over as much space as they can command. Tea is provided in most trains, and both men and women smoke, though the government, in its paternal care for the national health, has made a law forbidding the use of tobacco to persons under twenty. But the operation is performed on so minute a scale that one would think it harmless, even to those of tender years. The bowl of a pipe just holds a pellet the size of a pea, and one filling yields exactly three whiffs, with the result that more time is spent on preparation than on enjoyment.

The conductors supply slippers as well as tea, for the Japanese mind tends to regard a railway-carriage as a house. Many passengers arrive wearing wooden clogs, which create a surprisingly loud clatter on the platforms. These clogs are worn with only a thick white stocking, and can be taken off and resumed in a minute, whereas a boot is a most inconvenient article in Japanese life, for custom

orders that they must be taken off on entering a house. Yet men of the upper and middle classes wear European clothes, from an idea that it denotes education and civilization. This seems to me a woeful mistake. Apart from the question of boots, the native dress—an easy robe bound round the waist with a girdle—is far more comfortable and far more picturesque than coats and trousers, which are not graceful at the best, and seem to bring out all the bad points in Japanese figures. One has to get accustomed to the habit of changing or re-adjusting garments in public. It is done with consummate skill and without any exposure that could shock the most refined British philistine, but it is certainly surprising to see an elderly gentleman divest himself of a tweed suit in a first-class carriage, nor do the conventional senses feel happy when in similar publicity a lady imparts nature's nourishment to a child three or four years old.

In the matter of dress the women are no doubt the wiser sex, for they have now definitely abandoned European costume. Why they wear such large sashes is a mystery that the male mind had better leave alone, but in colouring one seems able to trace the working of a sensible though rather melancholy theory, inasmuch as brilliancy decreases with age, and each stage of life wears more sombre garments than the last. Babies are radiant in red and orange. In a young lady this exuberance is toned down to a gown of bluish-grey with a large bright sash, and then the colour gradually dies out. There are none of those ample, gorgeous dowagers who brighten our English homes. The old women look shrivelled, dress in dark clothes

with no ornaments, and sometimes cut their hair short.

There is no place in the world where age is honoured more than in the Far East, but it is remarkable how few fine-looking old men one sees there. Races differ very much in their power of enjoying this St. Martin's summer of beauty. The Mohammedan peoples of the Nearer East have a genius for producing magnificent old men, due to a combination of large frames, full beards, and flowing robes. In Europe we have the beards, but are poorly off in the way of dignified costumes. Africa is the continent of the young; a middle-aged African falls into deplorable physical decay, and no mental or moral energy resists the bodily ruin. The Far Easterns are not in quite so bad a case; they live long and retain their faculties, but the scanty beards and shrivelled appearance of the old men do not suggest to our eyes vigorous age.

A corner seat facing the engine seems the best place for admiring scenery from a train, but in Japan such corners do not exist, for the seats run along the sides of the carriage, leaving a passage down the middle, and you have to look straight right or left, seeing through or over your opposite neighbour as best you can. This makes it difficult to have a wide view; but there are not many to be seen in Japan, and the Japanese rarely build houses or towns on points of vantage that command large prospects. A fine panorama, for instance, can be seen from several points near Nikko, but not from the town or temples. Yet the people have a real love for scenery, as is attested, among other things, by the crowds of visitors who go to see celebrated

views. When I was at Matsushima, a monster party of tourists filled all the hotels. They went about in twelve boats by day, all towed in a line behind a single steamer, and on returning at night were met by a procession and a brass band. This did not pretend to be more than amusement, but it is pretty clear that in most of the excursions, called pilgrimages, love of an outing in pleasant scenery is the principal motive.

The celebrated views of Japan are mostly water scenes—the inland sea, the islets of Matsushima, the shores of Lake Biwa, and the Bay of Omura, near Nagasaki. In all of these the beauty consists not so much in the general effect or the grandeur of the rocks and waves as in the details—the graceful shapes of some promontory or island, seen through a temple gateway or under the boughs of a spreading pine, for the pines are not straight, as in Europe, but divide and spread, so that their long branches and scanty leaves make a good foreground for a peaceful sea-view. It is strange to find the pine and bamboo growing side by side, yet the sight is characteristic of Japan, and if one may permit oneself the fancy, this unexpected union of feathery grace and rather sombre strength has its counterpart in the national temper. Even if there is no sea or lake in the scenes that one recalls with most pleasure, there will generally be found a waterfall, or a river running under blossoming trees, and the ground is rarely level. Except the plains around Tokyo, most parts of Japan are covered with hills or mountains. The greatest of these, of course, is Fuji, but it is often hidden by clouds, at any rate in autumn, and I myself have only seen it once for an hour or two



Fuji.

after dawn. Lafcadio Hearn says somewhere that it is like a lotus-bud, and the comparison struck me as singularly just, for the cap of snow and the glaciers descending from it change colour in the morning sun and exactly resemble the red tip and streaks seen on the bursting lotus-bud just before it uncloses.

Japan is an ideal land for travelling. I know no country in the world where there is in the same space so much that is beautiful and interesting, and, what is even rarer, so much courtesy and kindness to strangers. All the principal sights are easily accessible by rail, and one ought, perhaps, to be thankful that there are still districts to which every European does not go. The deterrent is not so much difficulty of locomotion as the uneuropeanized Japanese hotel, of which I will speak hereafter. It has none of the ordinary terrors of bad inns, such as dirt, vermin, or incivility, but it practises a monastic severity in such things as food and heating. Where there are no railways a jinricksha is the ordinary vehicle, or, in hilly country, a sedan-chair. Horses are not exactly rare, but the people show little sign of caring for either riding or driving. There are one or two ancient highways, such as the famous Tokaido, leading westwards from Tokyo, along which the daimyos of the west used to come to pay their respects to the Shogun ; but most roads seem just good enough for taking produce to market. They are often shaded by picturesque avenues. The country looks prosperous. One notices the absence of pasturage and sheep, and, compared to China, of great stretches of grain-growing land. But all available land is cultivated, though often it is only the hollows of the valleys that can be used.

Villages are frequent, and suggest about the same standard of comfort and tidiness as English villages, but there are hardly any large houses or signs of a class higher than substantial farmers. Formerly the territorial daimyos lived in their country seats, but few of these are now kept as residences. The majority have become the property of the state, and are used as barracks or schools. It is strange how easily the social system was changed, for such old observances and privileges withstand revolutions better than thrones, and even in France the nobility did not give up their châteaux. But in Japan the feudalism which was the social life of the country fifty years ago seems to have vanished. The existing peerage is an entirely new creation. The nobles are not territorial, and reside mostly in Tokyo, having few tastes or duties that take them to the country. They are largely officials, and receive pensions from the government, which exercises some supervision over their marriages; for the Japanese carefully studied European institutions before they remodelled their own, and doubtless noticed the inveterate proclivity of peerages to marry Americans. Yet, possibly, the power of the old nobility has not been destroyed so thoroughly in reality as in appearance. One still hears of clans as an influence in Japanese politics, and is told that nearly all the prominent modern statesmen are members of four great daimiates, which formerly had almost royal powers in the south-eastern districts.

Architecture plays very little part in Japanese landscapes. It borrows more beauty from nature than it imparts, and it rarely dominates. A gateway or a bridge may add a finish to a view, but in town

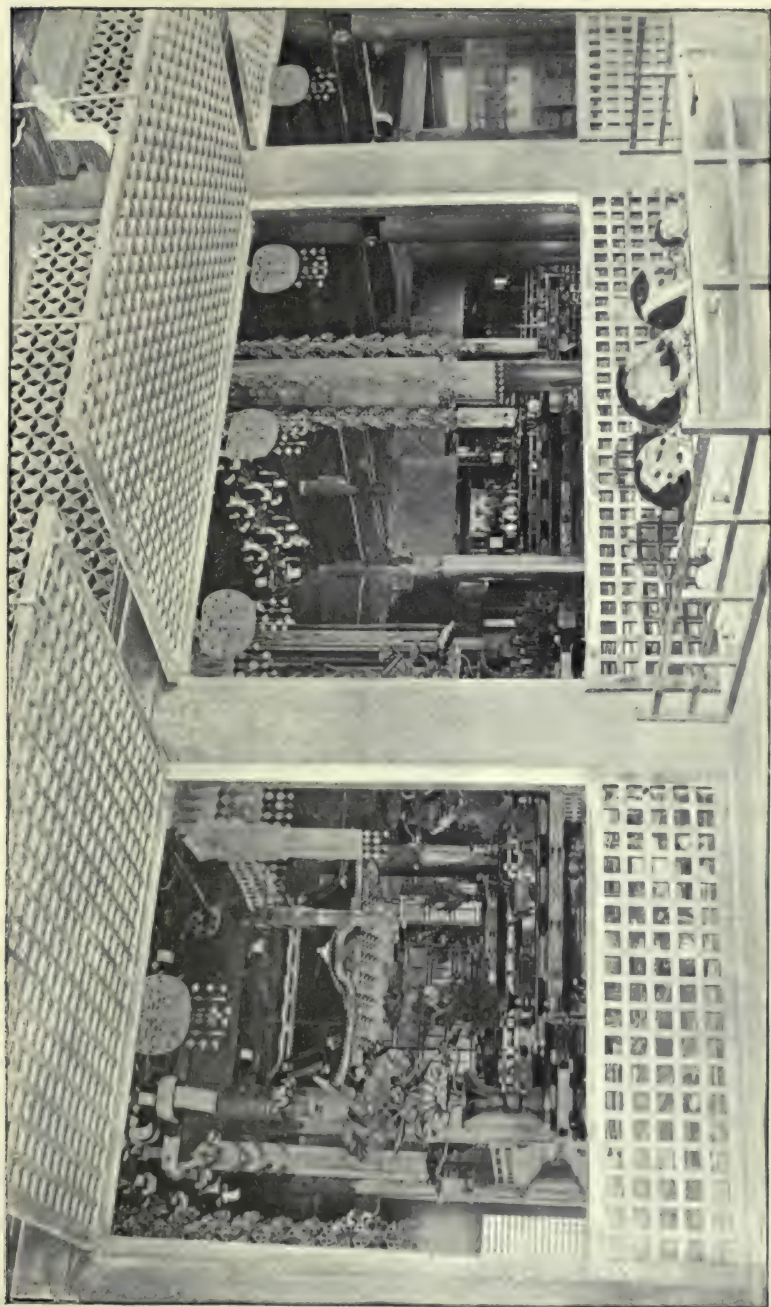


MIYAJIMA.

and country alike imposing buildings are rare. The most conspicuous are the castles, such as that still to be seen at Nagoya. They were mostly erected in the sixteenth century, and probably under Portuguese influence, which seems indicated by their moats, but the general appearance is altogether un-European, since they have four or five black recurving roofs, rising in tiers one above the other, divided by strips of white wall and rows of windows. Pagodas, similar to those in China, may be seen here and there, but, with these and a few other exceptions, Japanese architecture is unobtrusive. Even the Mikado's palaces at Kyoto are severely plain outside, and many temples would be better described to a European as ornamented gardens. Such a garden has gateways, flights of stairs, avenues, tombs and images, towers and pavilions ; but though one may see wonderful vistas through the trees and statues, and have glimpses of gilded interiors, it is rare to find a building which is remarkable apart from its surroundings, and very often the whole place is hidden by trees and invisible at a little distance.

The interior decoration is perhaps more successful in Buddhist temples than in secular buildings, because the altar forms a centre which gives a meaning and harmony to the accessory ornaments. A fine effect is produced by leaving the greater part of a dark wooden hall comparatively simple, and accumulating a mass of gold on the furthest wall opposite the entrance-door. But even in the imperial palaces the extreme bareness of the reception-rooms destroys their beauty to my eyes. Perhaps when in use they may look better. When empty they are simply a series of halls with beautiful matting

and marvellously painted or gilded walls, but no furniture. The result, I think, disappoints both the eye and mind. One searches in vain for a centre and a meaning. I would not deny that most European rooms are over-furnished, and that Japanese show a better instinct in displaying a few works of art in a space where they can be admired without crowding or competition. But halls like those at Kyoto, though meant as a supreme effort of ornamentation, seem to me unsatisfactory. They are settings which enclose nothing, and they do not suggest that they lead to anything beyond. The defect, no doubt, is connected with the weakness of Japanese sculpture as compared with Japanese painting and carving, or, to put it in another way, with the difficulty of using wood artistically for large buildings.



INTERIOR OF CHIONIN TEMPLE AT KYOTO.

XII

FAR EASTERN CHARACTERISTICS

THE Far East has a peculiar spell which obliges almost every one who writes about it to discuss the characteristics of its inhabitants. People write tomes on Egypt and India without troubling about the psychology of Egyptians and Hindus, but some real or imaginary enigma in the Far Eastern soul incites almost everybody to analyze and formulate its special qualities. Hence we have many luminous and interesting descriptions of the working of the Chinese and Japanese mind which are perfectly correct, but are for all that misunderstood, not only by the readers, but by the authors themselves, because it is assumed that the mental phenomena described are racial peculiarities, and not defects or oddities common to the whole human race. The reader sits in his easy chair and peruses a long catalogue of defects : want of truthfulness, of charity and profundity, of true religious feeling, sublimity, and originality ; and he feels, with more or less conscious self-satisfaction, as the author had felt before him, that all this is very extraordinary, and that he himself belongs to a superior race, which never fails in honesty or sympathy, is profound in its ideas, a monopolist of real religious feeling, sublime in its

art, and, above all, original in everything. Thus the author of that excellent book 'Chinese Characteristics' (himself an American) gives as one of the said characteristics intellectual turbidity. There is no doubt a good deal of turbidity in the Chinese mind, but is it unknown in America? In Great Britain, at any rate, not only mental turbidity, but a hatred of clear thinking and lucid statement, is one of the strongest national characteristics, and an average British Cabinet contains enough intellectual turbidity to supply a whole Chinese mob.

In going about the world, I have noticed that we make two criticisms of all foreign countries alike: that they are lands of contrast, and that the inhabitants are liars. In one sense all men are liars, for it is impossible (or, at any rate, it would involve an immense loss of time, as well as great social irritation) to make statements so accurate and uncompromising that they could be regarded as the whole and mere truth; so each nation selects for statement that part of the truth which it thinks most indispensable and least incongruous with its other ideas. Chinese, for instance, appear to us extremely inaccurate, and their looseness in such matters as time and distance is most annoying to the Anglo-Saxon mind. Yet the motive is in many cases amiable—namely, a desire to say what is pleasant; and, take them all round, I would as soon trust a Chinaman as an Englishman. In this country we have a love of compromise, especially noticeable in such serious matters as politics and religion. Here, again, the motive is amiable—the desire to avoid friction and not to quarrel about what is of minor importance. But to minds differently constituted it may seem that logic

and consistency are sacrificed in the process, and that no honest man can belong to a British political party or to the Anglican Church. And as for lands of contrast, most countries are that—certainly this country quite as much as China or Japan. The origin of this feeling of contrast lies largely in the desire to characterize a nation in a word or phrase. It proves impossible, and the baffled epigrammatist says there never was such an inconsistent, jumbled place in the world.

If one has to cram Japanese nature into a phrase, perhaps the best is to say that they are a nation of artists. Exceptions to the sweeping statement start up at once. The women blackened their teeth in old Japan, and do so still in country districts; the national sense of art has made no attempt to struggle with the uglier aspects of commerce—smoky chimneys, hideous buildings, and still more hideous advertisements. But if one takes artist in the sense, not of an æsthetic dreamer, but of one who likes to complete each task with its own appropriate and workmanlike finish, which cannot be wholly wanting in beauty, then I think we may justly describe the Japanese as artists, remembering that this all-round artistic feeling and sense of symmetry is not likely to favour any large outburst of genius, which is just what is lacking in Japan.

Another side of this artistic feeling is the enormous power of culture and self-training, not merely on traditional lines, but in many directions. The amusements and accomplishments of old Japan, such as the tea ceremonies, were merely an elaborate training in postures, motions, and language. The skill—and for Japanese the in-

terest—lies in performing a perfectly simple action, such as tea-drinking, in a prescribed methodical manner, in turning a meal into an exercise in artistic drill. The difference between this and a European game is that there is no competition and nothing to be won. The object and the prize is self-control—not merely self-restraint, but command of one's personality, and power to make it act a certain part. And this is exactly the power which the Japanese have shown in real life, when they decided that they must alter their political and social institutions, and did so.

All this merely amounts to the old and obvious statement that the Japanese are Asiatics who can imitate Europeans, and that is the root of the matter. This is what really differentiates them from other Asiatics, far more than the Bushido of which we have heard so much, or any particular moral system. Most races of Asia have the spirit of discipline and a readiness to sacrifice individual lives for ideals which are often religious, but from pride or negligence or mere stupidity they do not assimilate European methods. Had the Turks been willing to do this, they would have conquered all Europe by to-day, and the Chinese would have conquered all the world. The Japanese are a more intelligent people than the Turks, and more flexible than the Chinese. The religions and laws which they have at various periods respected have not held them in bondage, and the vicissitudes of their history have impressed on the national consciousness that no authority is infallible. However great the present devotion to the Mikado may be, he was admittedly a helpless puppet during many centuries. Yet the innate national sense of

discipline has never been undermined. It remains, not sworn to the allegiance of any traditional cause, but, so to speak, a mercenary—ready to train itself for the service of the cause that pays best. The origins of the Japanese race are not very certain, but if, as has been surmised, it is a hybrid between Mongols from the mainland of Asia and the Malays of the Archipelago, the psychology of the nation is explicable, for the light, changeable, artistic Malay temperament is steadied by the discipline and stolidity of the Mongol.

One wonders what further transformations this plastic, teachable nature may accept or impose on itself. The reserve and moderation shown by the people after the success of the late war are remarkable; they have not lost their head, and know that the conflict has been for them not merely a victory, but a serious trial. They feel they have gone through an economic crisis, and they desire to strengthen their commercial, financial, and industrial position. Means are not wanting: trade with China, enterprises in Korea and Manchuria, new lines of steamers to South America and Australia. But such expansion, aided by the increasing number of foreign merchants and tourists who frequent Japan, may affect military and artistic talents, and turn them into other channels.

It is even harder to summarize the Chinese character. The most obvious fact about the nation is its isolation, which is more surprising in a huge empire than in a small group of islands like Japan. The original Chinese, coming from the west, occupied and assimilated all the area around them, in most parts stopping only when heat or deserts

made the country unsuitable for their settlement. In early times, at any rate, they were not indisposed to learn from others, for they absorbed much Indian art and culture. But subsequently communication with India became interrupted ; the conquests of the Mongols and Manchus brought in nothing new from the outside, and when Europeans began to appear, it seemed to the Chinese as absurd to imitate them as it would to the inhabitants of London to wear pigtails. Yet, paradoxical as the suggestion may seem, it may be doubted if Chinese ideas are really so alien to our own as those of races nearer home, such as the Turks and Moors. These nations live in or close to Europe, and yet remain total strangers to European life, with military and religious ideals of their own, and an almost complete indifference to commerce. But there is no such radical difference between the ideals of Europe and the Far East. The people of those lands are neither warlike hordes nor fanatics. They build the roofs of their houses first, and in a thousand small matters do things, as it seems to us, backwards or inside out ; but in the broad outlines of their scheme of life, such as care for material prosperity, trade, and money-making, fighting in moderation, impatience of priestcraft, they are unlike Hindus and Moslems, and more like Europeans. This, alas, does not mean that they can get on better with Europeans than these other races, for similarity of interests and aspirations is too often only a cause of rivalry and jealousy.

One of the chief differences between the Chinese and Japanese is that the former have been hitherto a commercial, the latter a military, nation, though now the Chinese are learning war and the Japanese

commerce. This difference has had far-reaching consequences. The military nation is naturally amenable to discipline ; it will manœuvre to order. But commerce favours the growth of individual enterprise, or of voluntary guilds and companies. Hence the looseness of Chinese organization, the want of real control in spite of nominal autocracy, and the want of sentiment. The Japanese easily thinks of the authorities of his country as feudal lords and leaders ; for the Chinaman they are the heads of big business concerns, in which he has little interest.

One aspect of Chinese character of which we naturally think is the motive or idiosyncrasy which leads to occasional attacks on foreigners. It does not appear that the Chinese are really a cruel people ; the stories of torture, when carefully examined, do not show that they are worse than other Asiatic races. They are somewhat callous, and not disposed to active benevolence, but equally little to wanton barbarity. These racial troubles are comparable to the attacks made on Jews in Russia and on negroes in the southern States. In the last case the attacking mob is composed of people whose mental furniture is the same as our own, yet they commit barbarities, such as burning negroes alive, which seem contrary to our nature. The psychology of crowds and of individuals is not the same, and the best crowds are only semi-civilized. In all these cases of racial conflict the provocation is similar—fear of a race of alien habits and temper which is in some way formidable ; for the Jew is formidable in Russia as a usurer, and the negro in America for his numbers. The Chinese prejudice against foreigners (very similar to our own prejudices which make many people look down on

an educated Babu as a nigger) has made equal association between the races impossible, and Europeans have only too readily accepted the position of invaders and alienators of Chinese soil. One cannot visit a European concession, or Legation Street in Peking, without feeling that the foreigner is an even more aggressive intruder than in the European quarters of Constantinople. He has not only brought his own laws, but he has his hand on the land.

Even the missionaries produce the same impression. In the past China has not been inhospitable to foreign creeds, for Buddhism, though often opposed because its monastic teaching cut the root of Chinese ideas about family life, obtained a firm footing, and there are 20,000,000 Mohammedans in the empire. But these religions did not separate themselves politically, whereas Christian churches and schools are extraterritorial, under the jurisdiction of foreign states and not of the Chinese authorities, who have no legal right to enter them. The analogy of eastern Europe obliges us to say that it is not surprising if sinister motives are ascribed by the ignorant classes to communities who segregate themselves from the ordinary life of the country, or if accusations are made similar to the curiously persistent story that Jews sacrifice Christian children. Nor is the outlook for the future altogether hopeful. One cannot blame the Powers for insisting on adequate protection for their legations in a state which has shown itself incapable or reluctant to undertake this duty, but there can be no doubt that the presence of foreign troops in Peking is likely to prove a constant irritant to the growing sense of nationality. It is some consolation to notice that the sentiments which find

expression in placards, tracts, and other appeals to popular sentiment are less menacing than they were some years ago. The language used to-day, if not exactly friendly to foreigners, counsels circumspection, and says, in effect, Let us learn their tricks before we make an end of them.

XIII

JAPANESE LITERATURE

THOUGH Japan may justly claim to be the most remarkable country in Asia, and though it has produced an enormous mass of writings, it cannot be said that the compositions of Japanese authors, whether in prose or verse, have added anything of value to the literature of the world. This is remarkable, because most great Asiatic nations have been great in literature, and China has dominated the whole of eastern Asia for the last 2,000 years simply by imposing the writings of ancient Chinese sages as the one canon and norm of civilization. Japanese literature, on the other hand, has hitherto been unknown outside Japan, and has never exercised the faintest influence on any other country, not even on Korea.

As the development of Japan has been very different from that of other Asiatic countries, it is interesting to notice that the literature is also different, and presents decided characters of its own, although it has been strongly influenced by Chinese models, and some of it is actually written in Chinese. It is an essentially secular literature, whereas most Asiatic literatures have grown up around sacred books. Japan has nothing of this

kind except some collections of myths and early chronicles, which may be compared to the Eddas, but make no pretension to compete with the scriptures of the Hindus, Mohammedans, or Buddhists. No doubt the absence of such works is one reason why Japan had no message for the surrounding nations. It also goes far to explain her free and untrammelled development.

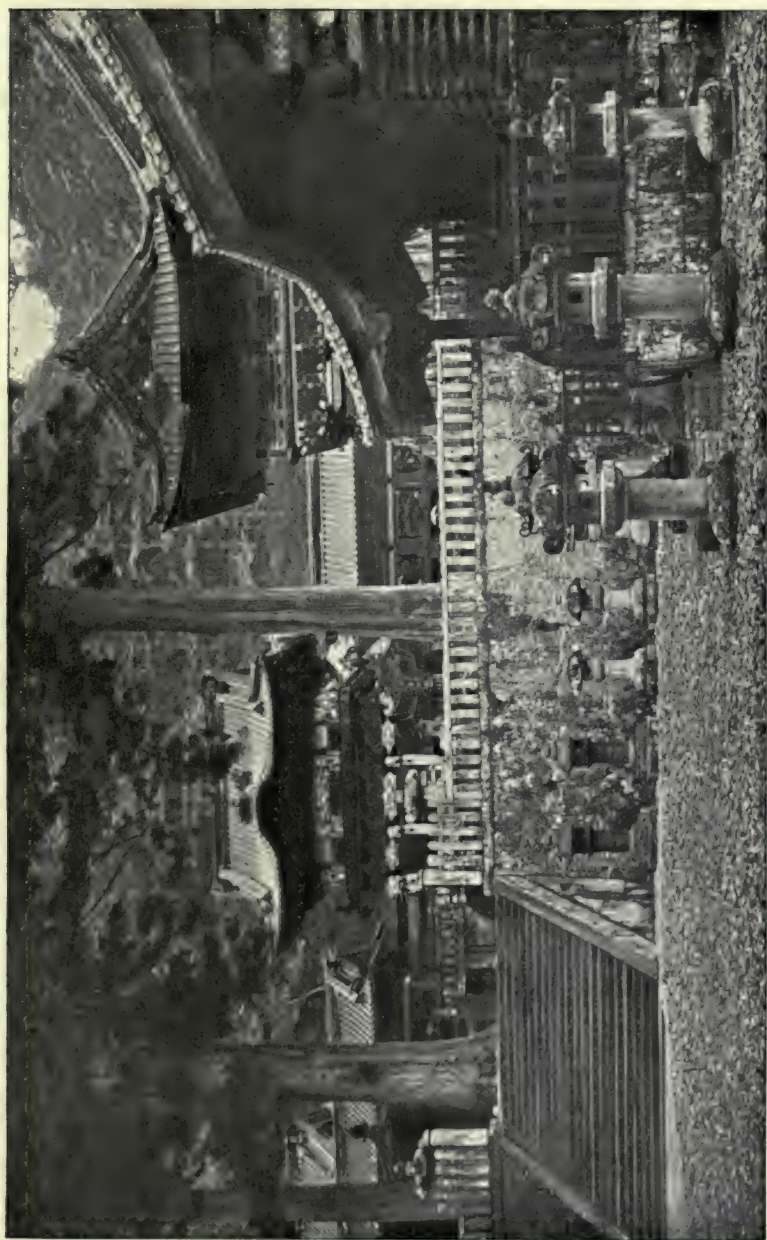
The best literature of Japan seems to have been produced in the period when Kyoto was the seat of government, from about A.D. 800 to A.D. 1186. The next four centuries were a dark age, in which comparatively little was written, but the Tokugawa epoch, from 1603 to 1867, in which Japan was ruled by the Shoguns of that family and closed to all the world, sent forth a literary flood of enormous volume, though mediocre quality, nor has the supply been diminished under the present régime.

The older Kyoto literature was largely composed by women. One reason for this singular circumstance may be that men wrote in Chinese, which was regarded as the proper vehicle for serious compositions, leaving the vernacular to the feebler sex. But it is remarkable that the Chinese about this time called Japan the Queen Country. At any rate, this feminine influence is no doubt largely responsible for the gossipy lightness of touch to be found in the writings of this period, a lightness by no means incompatible with another quality often associated with gossip—interminable prolixity. This style is sometimes called *Zuihitsu*, or following the pen; that is to say, jotting down whatever passes through the mind—anecdotes, sentiments, descriptions of scenery, estimates of people—so that the

composition seems sometimes almost a novel, sometimes a diary, sometimes *impressions de voyage*. Such are the Pillow Sketches of Sei Shōnagon, who was maid of honour to the Empress about the year 1000, and left an account of her life in the palace, wherein can still be read not only the loves, jealousies, and intrigues of the court, but even the quarrels of the imperial cats and dogs. She had a habit, found in other Japanese writers, of making lists of pleasant and unpleasant things, which is not so dull as it sounds. Among dreary things are a brazier where the fire has gone out and a nursery where a child has died—a touch of pathos which is strangely European. Among unpleasant things she counts a dog who barks at your lover when he comes to pay a clandestine visit, and a man who sings the praises of another woman. Among pleasant things we find to be asked the way by a handsome man who stops his carriage to speak to you. It may be surmised that she was not more strait-laced than was indispensable for a maid of honour of the period.

Somewhat similar, inasmuch as they are literary records of trivial everyday events, are the 'Tosa Nikki,' a narrative of a journey from Tosa to Kyoto in A.D. 935, and the much later works of Kenkō, an amiable ecclesiastic of mundane tastes, who wrote a collection of sketches and essays, and said, among other things, that you can have too much furniture in a room, too many pens in a stand, too many trees in a garden, but you can't have too many books. He also said that nothing opens a man's eyes so much as travel, no matter where—a remarkable sentiment for a Japanese in the fourteenth century.

The practically unanimous testimony of critics



STONE LANTERNS OUTSIDE TEMPLE.

admits that these works, if compared with similar productions from other countries, cannot be classed as literary masterpieces. Their authors had not the skill to avoid being diffuse and trivial. But they seem to me of real interest, as showing how different was the Japanese spirit from that of other Asiatic people even a thousand years ago. One cannot imagine the Pillow Sketches being written in Arabic or Sanskrit. They are in no way akin to the Arabian Nights or Indian tales and dramas; and though they are more like the compositions of the Chinese, who have also a talent for essay-writing, they are freer and seem to have originated independently.

It would seem, too, that the Japanese novel is not derived from the Chinese,* for romances were written in Japan about A.D. 1000, if not earlier, whereas critics consider that the earliest Chinese novels date from the thirteenth century. Nor is it difficult to explain their independent origin, for the transition from a gossipy diary wherein conversations are recounted to a novel which is a biography of the hero is not difficult. A celebrated romance of this kind is the *Genji*, also the handiwork of a lady, and written about the same time as the *Pillow Sketches*. It follows the fortunes of its hero from birth to the age of fifty-one, through fifty-four books. No European appears to have been bold enough to read the whole of this gigantic work, but it would seem that here, too, the literary talent is moderate. Still, the general plan and conception, the idea of making the interest of the work depend on the description and development of character rather

* The Japanese drama also seems to be independent in origin, and is superior to Chinese theatrical compositions.

than on adventurous and supernatural incidents, indicates a tone of mind which is rare in Asiatics.

Perhaps the novelist Bakin is almost the only Japanese author whose name has penetrated to Europe. He flourished in the first half of the nineteenth century, and wrote an immense number of novels, mostly very long. European and native taste appear to differ fundamentally about the merits of his works, for while his countrymen admire his fertility of invention, his learning, his wealth of language, characters, and incident, we find his style obscure, and his plots so complicated that it is impossible to keep count of the characters and their doings. Most Europeans give the palm among modern writers to Ikku, who lived about the same time as Bakin, and wrote a humorous book which has been compared to *Pickwick* and to *Gil Blas*. It describes the travels and Rabelaisian escapades of two Japanese making their way along the Tokaido, the great highway of old Japan; but for the native mind it has, though admired, not the same charm as more ornate literature.

As in China, there is a strong tendency to cramp literature by forcing it into certain moulds, both of thought and style. This is peculiarly noticeable in poetry. In matters of literary proportion the Far East—both Chinese and Japanese—seems bewitched. A novel cannot be too long for them, a poem can hardly be too short. Almost all Japanese poems follow one of two models, one consisting of five lines, containing in all thirty-one syllables, and the other still shorter, consisting of three lines and seventeen syllables. Also, the use of Chinese words (roughly corresponding to words of Latin or Greek origin

in English) is considered incorrect in poetry. Reduced to such narrow limits of space and diction, Japanese poets have evidently a very restricted field. Anything like narrative, rhetoric, connected thought, or dramatic situations, is impossible. A poem is necessarily a mere motto or vignette recording an impression. It is in words the exact analogue of those Japanese paintings which depict a single spray of flowers or a bird, and it is clearly a product of the same genius which delights in dwarfing trees and keeping a pine a hundred years old in a porcelain pot. The most exquisite workmanship is lavished on these delicate morsels, and the best of them are veritable carved gems in words; but clearly this practical abolition of all other kinds of poetry, and the enforced dwarfing of possible Homers and Valmikis to the five-line limit, must have been disastrous to the national genius—or, rather, there can have been hardly any national genius for poetry to allow it. Also, even more than in China, verse became merely an elegant accomplishment. People wrote Tankas (as the five-line poems are called) by the thousand, with the aid of poetical dictionaries like the classical *Gradus*, and both the ideas and their expression became stereotyped. The following Tanka from the *Kokinshiu* is perhaps a good sample of its class :

‘ Do I forget thee
 Even for so brief a space
 As the ears of grain
 On the fields of autumn
 Are lit up by the lightning’s glare ?’

(Trans. Giles.)

That is not much longer than the scene which it photographs, but it is detailed in comparison with

the three-lined poems, or Haikai, which are not only impressionist, but so elliptical and enigmatical as to be unintelligible to a foreigner. Thus, when a Japanese writes—

‘That single note—
Did the moon sing?
Cuckoo,’

he is under the impression that he has produced a poem, and he means that, hearing a single note on a moonlight night, he looked out of the window, and, seeing nothing but the moon, at first thought that luminary was singing, but ultimately adopted the saner view that the sound came from a cuckoo.

Of quite late years, it is said that a reaction has set in against the exclusive use of these tiny poems, and that more liberty and variety in both arrangement and diction is becoming the fashion. It does not, however, appear that any poet of genius, or even of particular talent, has arisen, and much the same must be said of the prose-writers. The crop of books and articles on political, philosophical, religious, and scientific subjects, all the themes which occupy serious magazines in Europe, is large, and bears eloquent testimony to the Japanese powers of assimilation and imitation, but the facility of the writers is more remarkable than their profundity and originality. The literature which Japan has hitherto produced suggests that the race is not gifted for letters as it is for art and politics. It is remarkable that Buddhism, which inspired so many architects, painters, and craftsmen, has produced hardly any religious books in Japanese, and that there is no adequate expression either in prose or verse of the patriotism and loyalty which the people

undoubtedly feel. Their oratory, too, is said to be indifferent.

The deficiencies of Japanese literature are perhaps connected with the character of the Japanese language, which may be worth a moment's consideration here, for the speech of so vigorous and progressive a people is likely to extend considerably its sphere, and the time may come when even Californian schools will have to teach it. It is a composite language, not unlike English in the proportions of its mixed vocabulary. There is a native substratum which is sufficient for the affairs of everyday life and also for poetry, but besides this there has been, and still is, a steady influx of borrowed Chinese words. They correspond to the Latin, French, and Greek elements in English, and are indispensable, not only for the formation of abstract terms and for all literary, scientific, philosophical, and political discussion, but also for polite and elegant conversation.

It might have been supposed that the same national tendency which restored the Mikado and Shintoism to power would have shown itself in the purification of the language and the development of the purely Japanese element. But, strange to say, the result has been the opposite. The Japanese found that they suddenly required equivalents for an enormous number of scientific and political words and phrases in use in Europe or America, and so strong was the instinct that these expressions must be rendered by Chinese and not by native words that the Chinese element in the language increased more rapidly than at any previous period. Thus, such a phrase as survival of the fittest is translated by *Yū-shō-rep-pai*—literally, 'superior wins, inferior loses'—and it is obvious

to a Japanese that the laws of art and propriety require that all these words should be Chinese. As Chinese is a rigidly monosyllabic language, whereas in Japanese words of five, six, or more syllables are plentiful, we obtain the singular result that, the more abstruse the subject discussed, the shorter are the words employed. You may babble about the weather in sesquipedalian words, but not about higher subjects; and Mr. Herbert Spencer's most imposing definitions seem naked, shivering, and unfledged when rendered in the austere monosyllables of Cathay.

The non-Chinese part of the language appears to be akin in its general structure to Korean and to the great group of agglutinative languages, comprising Turkish, Hungarian, Finnish, Mongol, and Manchu, whose home is in Central Asia. The resemblance in structure seems to me considerable, and a comparison of the oldest Japanese and oldest Turkish would probably yield interesting results. Most of these languages have an unhappy power of building up elaborate verbal forms, particularly gerunds, with the result that, though they may be excellent as a means for simple and direct conversation, they are apt to become intolerably complicated for literary purposes. It is with diffidence that I criticize a language of which I have only a smattering, like Japanese; still, even a smattering of Chinese enables one to see with what force and point its pregnant monosyllables may be marshalled, and it is equally clear that this conciseness and significance are missing in Japanese sentences. The genius of the language is far lighter and more playful than that of Turkish, but this makes it, not shorter and clearer, but

simply less logical and more pleonastic, diffuse, and sprawling.

This is not a grammatical treatise, and I will not pursue the subject further, except to invite any reader whom it may interest to examine some of the literal translations in Chamberlain's 'Handbook of Colloquial Japanese.' He will find, I think, that the sentences are monstrously long, imperfectly coordinated in their various parts, and split up into little phrases in a way which interferes with their continuity. There is a constant tendency, for instance, to say, not 'The thing is good,' but 'As for the thing, it is good.' Also, the simplest verbs, like 'to be' and 'to do,' appear in a surprising variety of forms, four or five syllables long, which yet appear to have very little verbal force, seeing to what an extent it is possible to pile them one on the top of the other. Nor does the excessive use of honorifics, which affects even the verb 'to be,' show a good sense of linguistic and literary proportion. I am obliged to conclude that the language of the Japanese is, as a vehicle of composition, very inferior, I will not say to European tongues, but to Chinese or Arabic; and it is probably a correct instinct which leads them to use Chinese as much as possible when treating difficult themes. But let us give honour where honour is due. Japanese is creditably deficient in the vocabulary of cursing and swearing, and the sound is light and musical.

Another very curious point about the Japanese language is its system of writing. It first borrowed the Chinese hieroglyphics, and then, by using a certain number as phonetics to represent various recurrent monosyllables, gradually developed two

syllabaries which are practically alphabets. It is remarkable that, having gone so far, it did not go further and extend the use of the alphabetical or syllabic principle, and even more remarkable that a proposal to introduce the Roman alphabet, which found favour some years ago, entirely failed, and has now few supporters. The main body of the writing is still composed of Chinese hieroglyphics, which are supplemented by the syllabaries in cases of doubt or difficulty—as, for instance, when foreign names have to be represented or the inflections of Japanese words. Chinese, having no inflections of any kind, made no provision for expressing them. A given hieroglyphic means ‘put,’ and cannot be varied; but the Japanese verb *oku*, ‘to put,’ can assume such forms as *oita* and *okanakereba*. Spelling is one of the most difficult things in the world to change, as is seen nowhere more lamentably than in English-speaking countries, where every praiseworthy attempt to improve our monstrous and ridiculous orthography is stifled by the opposition, not only of prejudice, but, alas, of learning. But the case of Japan is strange. The Japanese child has to learn two syllabaries and several thousand characters before he can read. An ordinary newspaper requires about 6,000. The use of these characters is by no means easy. In Chinese the matter is relatively simple. Each character is a picture with one meaning and sound of its own. But in Japanese only practice enables the reader to know whether a given character should be read in the Japanese or the Chinese way, there being generally both native and borrowed words for every idea. It is as if one had in English signs which were read ‘man’ and ‘word’

when found separately, but when put together were pronounced 'anthropology'; or as if one wrote '£ s. d. man,' and read it 'financier.'

It seems amazing that the Japanese, who showed such unusual speed and thoroughness in introducing many reforms, should not have changed this cumbersome system, but it holds its ground. One good point it has—the beauty of the characters as artistic designs. The nation feels not unjustly that something of the fine art of life would be lost if it ceased to cultivate the manual and mental dexterity required to trace and decipher these full, sweeping curves, beside which mere letters seem meagre and expressionless. Also, it is a most singular fact that children in Japan are said to learn to read as quickly as in Europe, despite the enormous difference in the amount to be acquired. It would seem that at a certain age the mind can assimilate almost anything in the way of language or writing with equal ease, though it is probably necessary that the knowledge should be imparted in the course of everyday life, and not merely as a school lesson. But the definite objection raised by most Japanese to the substitution of an alphabet for the Chinese hieroglyphics is that the literary language would be unintelligible if only the sound were indicated, which, of course, implies that it may be unintelligible if read aloud. The number of words with the same sound, especially those borrowed from the Chinese, is very great, and cannot be paralleled in European languages. Thus, according to the dictionary, there are twenty-nine separate words pronounced *sho* and twenty-six pronounced *ko*. Among the latter are the first and second titles of nobility, corresponding to Duke

and Marquess, which are exactly similar in sound, but are written with different characters. Nor is it only monosyllables that are so various in meaning. The dictionary registers five words *shoseki*, signifying respectively 'penmanship,' 'library,' 'high rank,' 'nitrate of potash,' and 'evidence.' The problem of writing phonetically is clearly more difficult than in other tongues, and probably the first step required is to simplify the literary style and approximate it to ordinary language.



A TEA HOUSE AND LOTUS-POND.

XIV

NIKKO

JAPAN owes much of its beauty to its vegetation. The dominant flowers succeed one another, and month by month impart a new tone and character to the landscape. First comes the plum-blossom, then the cherry-blossom, then the wistaria, azalea, and lotus. When I was there in September the prevailing tint seemed to be given chiefly by a tree with red blossoms, called 'the flower of a hundred days,' and red wild-lilies repeated the same note of colour in the grass. This combination of dark red and green is very characteristic of Japan, and no doubt these flowers suggested the idea of erecting red temples in green woods, as may be seen at Nara, Nikko, and elsewhere. I do not know what is the correct name of the flower of a hundred days. One of the difficulties of describing Japan is that one has no words for the commonest flowers and trees. The Japanese names are mysterious ; the scientific names not much more illuminating, and generally repellent, for the language of science and poetry rarely agrees. The convolvulus and lotus can perhaps flower in both worlds, but it is hard for mere literature to praise the lezpedeza and the eulalia, euphonious as the latter is. It is unfortunate that the finest tree of Japan can be

called nothing shorter or easier than *cryptomeria*—an ungainly vocable with vague botanical associations, and, to my mind, slightly suggesting a moss. Yet if beauty has any claim to be called something easy to say, the tree deserves as popular and direct a name as the pine or elm. It rises straight from the ground, often not branching till high up, and leaving a clear shaft of some hundred feet, spreading into a crown of dark foliage above. A fine tree for avenues, leaving air and space, and not hampering the road with its boughs, but resolutely tracing the border with a row of tall, inflexible trunks. In Europe we think of Japan too much as a country of chrysanthemums and cherry-blossom, and forget this background of great, straight, sombre trees.

Nikko is the place where the *cryptomeria* is seen at its best, both in avenue and forest, and it merits the oft-quoted Japanese encomium, 'Do not say splendid (*Kekkō*) until you have seen Nikko.' It unites the beauty of nature and art, and its art, though it cannot be said to compete with the greatest triumphs of architecture, is perfect in its own way, and marks the culmination of a style. The chief monuments are tombs and mortuary temples, not unlike those in the Shiba Park at Tokyo, but more magnificent and more impressive, since the surroundings have more natural grandeur.

Nikko lies to the north of Tokyo, on the eastern slope of the mountain range which forms the backbone of the main island. It was discovered by a medieval saint and mountaineer called *Shōdō Shōnin*, who spent his life in scaling the surrounding peaks and building temples in what then seemed inacces-

sible altitudes. Nowadays the railway has annihilated the hardships and much of the interest of the journey, but in Shōdō's time there were no roads, and he had to contend with torrents, snowdrifts, and perhaps active volcanoes, to which the legend adds dragons and devils. Nikko must have attained some celebrity when Ieyasu died in 1616, for, after due inquiry, it was found to be the best resting-place in all Japan for his masterful old bones, which were transferred there. This Ieyasu, as Europe by now knows, was the Shogun who founded the Tokugawa dynasty, and began the régime of feudalism and isolation which lasted until 1857. The present era has witnessed the reversal of his principles and work, but he is still revered, and the ascetic, domineering face represented in his portraits incarnates one aspect of the national spirit. The systematic thoroughness with which he closed and arrested development is only another side of that discipline and growth according to order which of late has displayed itself in deliberate expansion and regulated progress. Some years later his grandson Iemitsu, after strengthening and perfecting his system by such unamiable measures as rigorous espionage and the persecution of Christianity, was also buried at Nikko. Since then no prince has been judged worthy to join the retrograde but strenuous pair, and they lie, as they would probably wish, far from the bones of enlightened reformers.

Though the railway now runs to Nikko itself, there still remains a much finer approach through two avenues of cryptomerias, no less than twenty miles long, which unite about four miles from the town. These immense perspectives of ancient trees are a

fitting introduction, not to the Japan of geishas and butterflies, but to the Japan that remembers civil strife and despotic rule; also to the Japan of the Russian war. The rest of the landscape is rather sombre—forests, waterfalls, and mountains. It is somewhat like the Balkans, but the vegetation is different. In late autumn the maple-leaves are said to display surprising colours; now, in September, all is dead green. From any point of vantage one can see that the whole district is a mass of mountain spurs descending to a plain that stretches towards the sea, and, looking down on them, one understands the Chinese notion that the dragon is the spirit of nature which dwells in mountains and streams; for these tangled ridges resemble a heap of petrified reptiles, flat-bellied, crouching monsters, with crests and claws and projecting vertebræ. The sound of water is heard everywhere. The tourist is urged to visit half a dozen waterfalls, and through the forest pour torrents in broad grey, stony beds that break its green uniformity. According to the canons of Japanese art, which prescribe a time for everything, it is proper in the month of September to allude to moonlight on water. The cold, still September moon (for it is not warm in these mountains) seems to make the rush of water more audible, and the whole scene becomes an impressionist sketch in ink: black avenues and groves of tall trees intersected by white roads and torrents.

On arriving at Nikko, one drives up a long street of curio shops, and then reaches a river. Here is the first intimation that we are not on ordinary soil. The river is spanned by two bridges—one an everyday bridge, for all the world; the other the sacred

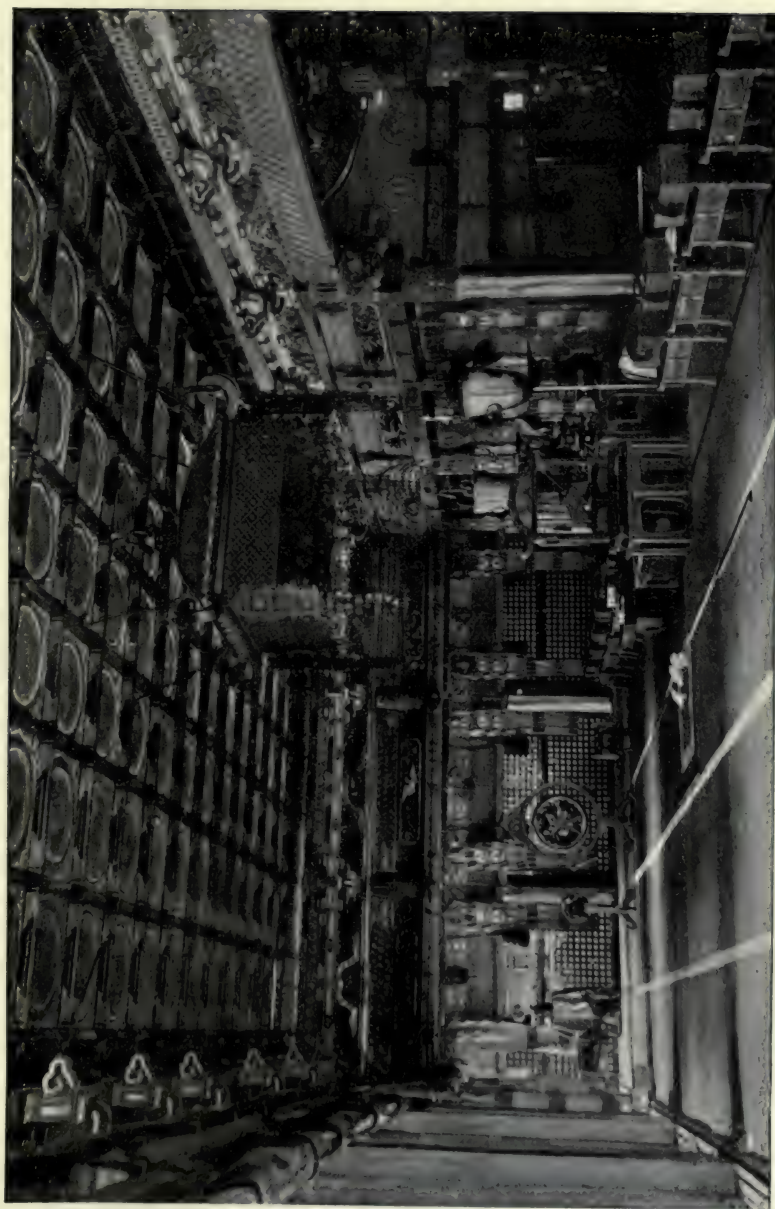
red bridge reserved for the use of deities and the Mikado. It fell into such bad repair that even the light feet of the spirit world began to find it unsafe, and it is now in process of reconstruction.

Though the mausoleums are close to the further bank of the river, they are invisible, and from no point of view do they play any part in the general landscape. As I have said before, Chinese and Japanese architecture rarely takes the form of single edifices which create an impression by their size and shape, but rather of pavilions distributed over parks and gardens. They are often picturesque, thanks to their surroundings as much as to their own merits, and are frequently erected on different levels, and connected by flights of steps, so that the whole must be judged somewhat as we judge the interior of a mansion—as a harmonious suite of courtyards, halls, staircases, and corridors. This is certainly the case at Nikko, although there the buildings themselves arrest the eye on account of their wonderful colour. Imagine one of those lacquered boxes or cabinets which one not infrequently sees in collections of Japanese art swollen to the size of a house, and you have a description without exaggeration of one of these amazing structures. When I saw them they had been freshly painted, but the lacquered panels, so rarely seen in Europe except on small objects, must at all times produce a peculiar effect. The ground colour is mostly black, picked out with a good deal of gold and vermilion, which naturally dominate in the general impression; and in places other colours, such as white, blue, and green, are used. There are two mausoleums—one of Ieyasu and one of Iemitsu. The former is undoubtedly the more

gorgeous, but the latter is perhaps more artistically arranged.

You enter by a vermilion portico (vermilion is so common here that it ought to be what grammarians call a constant epithet of buildings), guarded by gigantic effigies of tutelary deities. Every gateway seems to have these divine watch-dogs. Through the portal one has a pleasant view of a walled garden, such as may be sometimes seen through the archways of Oxford colleges, with a granite water-basin under a beautiful canopy, and rows of stone lanterns, such as are generally set round Japanese tombs to light lost ghosts. Either some special favour of nature or a refinement of the gardener's art has struck a nice balance between primness and disorder. The flowers in the walls suggest age without decay, and not, as in Chinese buildings, ruin and neglect. On the left a flight of steps begins to ascend the hill among the cryptomerias. At the top of the first flight is another red portico, with statues of the gods of wind and rain. Then follows a much longer flight, where for an instant one loses sight of the temples and sees nothing but the stone steps and the forest. Immediately before the shrine is a third gate with more gigantic deities, this time the four heavenly kings, who are each of a different colour, and guard a quarter of the world. After this comes the principal building, which is not much larger in appearance than the others. It is generally called the mortuary temple, but its purpose is not very clearly defined. It is not a tomb, but partly an oratory where prayers are said for the soul of Iemitsu, partly a memorial chapel where he is half deified.

The light inside is at first perplexing. There is



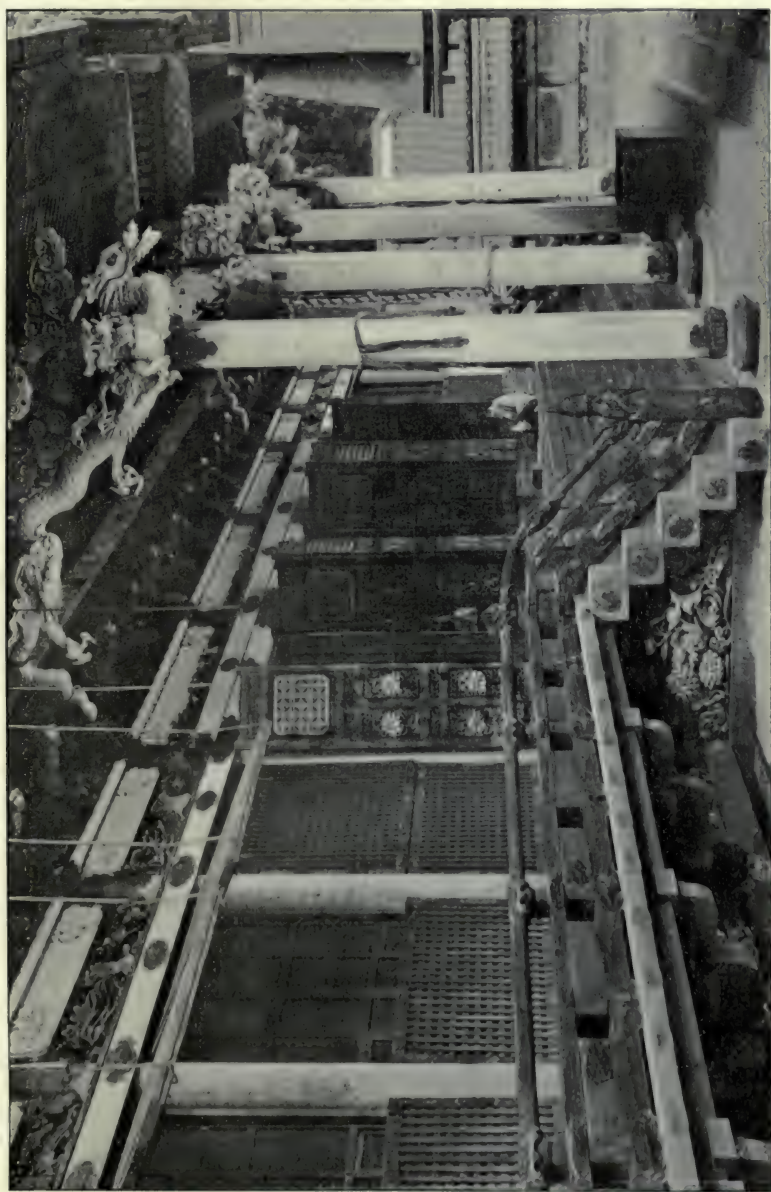
INTERIOR OF TEMPLE OF IEMITSU.

little illumination from without, but almost everything is of gold—ceilings, walls, and ornaments. There are rows of golden vases, books in golden bindings, effigies in gold of gods, birds, and flowers, which gradually take shape as the eye becomes accustomed to this golden obscurity. The grave is some way higher up the hill, at the top of more steps, and is a simple bronze dome with gates in front, but not roofed over. The same arrangement of gorgeous porticoes and chapels leading up to an unornamented tomb is also found in Ieyasu's mausoleum and in the Shiba Park. The moral is obvious : thus far shall thy pomp follow thee.

The mausoleum of Ieyasu is much the same in arrangement, but is more magnificent in decoration, and comprises more buildings. There is a pagoda of five stories near the entrance, and in the first courtyard are storehouses, a stable, a library, and a cistern of holy water, mostly gorgeous with gold and vermilion. Above this court rises a stone terrace on which stand more towers and temples, and two gateways leading to an inner court and the shrine. To describe these buildings would be merely to repeat words like gold, vermilion, and a blaze of colour ; but the reader must picture to himself piles of carved woodwork, lacquered or painted, with a background of dark green trees. The most remarkable of all the structures are, perhaps, the two gateways. They are mainly white and gold, and seem to be carved in ivory, whereas the surrounding buildings are mainly vermilion and black ; and this variation in colour makes the gates noticeable even in this monotony of magnificence. It is worthy of remark that the ornamentation of Nikko by no means shows that sim-

plicity and reserve which is generally supposed to be the rule in Japanese art. One is told that the national taste has a delicate austerity which regards single figures or flowers as more artistic than groups or bouquets. But this is not true here. The two gateways are covered with a profusion of carving: flowers and patterns, Chinese sages and children playing, all manner of real and imaginary animals, lions, eagles, dragons, unicorns, and phoenixes, that bewilder and distract the eye.

When one's first astonished admiration of the temples is over, I think one wonders whether they are quite in harmony with their setting. The great trees and the rushing waters seem to demand a simpler shrine, and these glittering pavilions would be better in some Buddhist paradise of light and lotuses. How do they stand the wind and the rain? But Japanese art is essentially decorative, and as a decorative arrangement nothing could be more effective than the background of sombre green, which gives distinctness to the fantastic outlines and brilliancy to their colours. And then the great trees remind one that the place is a mausoleum, which one might otherwise easily forget, and add a solemnity to the steps that lead from the temple to the tomb—that cold, plain-spoken staircase that says: 'Your friends may pray for you as much as they like to all the powers of heaven and hell, but you must come up here alone and fare as you deserve.' So perhaps criticism is unnecessary, and merely 'preaching a sermon to Buddha'—the polite Japanese equivalent for teaching your grandmother.



TEMPLE AT NIKKO.

XV

I S E

THE shrines of Ise are one of the great national centres of Japan. Little of religion, as we understand it, is to be seen there, but they are a living link with the past, and they offer, not spiritual benefits, but opportunities for expressing patriotic feeling. It was to these temples that the Mikado sent embassies announcing the declaration of war with China and Russia, and the popular veneration for them is shown, not only by the crowds of pilgrims which they attract, but by the sad end of Viscount Mori, who was assassinated in 1889. He was Minister of Education, and the late Professor Max Müller gave an amusing description of how he paid a flying visit to Oxford in order to inquire between two trains what would be the best religion for Japan to adopt. This dangerous familiarity with sacred things emboldened him, when inspecting the Geku temple at Ise, to push aside with his stick a curtain which concealed the mysteries of the inner shrine. For this unpardonable offence he was assassinated by a fanatic, who perished in the tumult which ensued, but has since his death received almost divine honours from the populace for avenging the insult offered to the deity.

This fanatic left behind him a statement of his

motives, for the assassination was deliberately planned, and did not take place until some time after the sacrilege. He was not moved by ordinary religious zeal, but thought that such an insult to the gods would result in some national calamity if not avenged, and therefore he considered it his duty as a good citizen to avert the danger which threatened his country.

The worship of Ise represents the purest form of Shintoism—that strange ancient religion of Japan which seems to offer nothing that can satisfy the emotional or scientific cravings of modern man, but yet survives and thrives, supported alike by popular superstition and official favour. Its existence would seem incredible had we not in the past something similar in the deification of Roman emperors—a religion which nobody could believe and almost everybody practised. In the Middle Ages, when Buddhism was powerful, most Shinto temples were served by Buddhist priests, and lost their distinctive character, but it is said that in Ise the ancient rites have always been maintained uncontaminated.

Ise is the name, not of a place, but a district, and the sacred locality is more precisely the town of Yamada. It lies in the peninsula which stretches southwards from Kyoto, and enshrines the oldest memories and traditions of Japan. Here is the land of Yamato (still a patriotic name for Japan, much like Britain), where the first Emperor, Jimmu, is said to have landed, coming from Kiushu across the Inland Sea. It is a hilly district, opening into plains close to the coast. The valleys are laid out in rice-fields, but most of the country consists of wooded hills, fit cover for shy ancestral gods. Scattered here

and there are tumuli of ancient kings. Until recently these were neglected and allowed to become almost effaced, but under the present régime they have been repaired, and a modern mausoleum has been erected in honour of Jimmu. It must be confessed that there is something, not exactly artificial—for the sentiments and results are obviously real—but volitional, about all this Shinto revival, the demonstrative loyalty to the Mikado, and the much-talked-of Bushido. None of these things are inveterate national habits, like the Confucianism of China. About fifty years ago the Japanese came to the conclusion that the best thing for them to do was to revive the worship of the Shinto gods and honour the Mikado, and they proceeded to train their minds accordingly as methodically as they rearmed their troops.

Yamada is a pilgrim town. Most Japanese visit it once in their lives, and custom allows children and apprentices to play truant and start off to the holy city on a clandestine pilgrimage, which is at once discovered and condoned. There is no difficulty about the journey. In modern Asia holy places are a godsend to railways, whatever they may be to worshippers, and though Mecca and Lhasa still exact a tribute of weary feet, Juggernaut must give to a certain company in third-class fares almost as much as his priests receive in alms. Japanese deities are extremely susceptible on many points, and will not tolerate carriages in their precincts, but they seem to have no objection to trains. The Geku temple is almost opposite the railway-station at Yamada, and the approach to it looks like the entrance to any public garden. Nor is there any religious restraint

about the town. It is a place of hotels and theatres. The pilgrims do a little praying by day and amuse themselves at night, and, as has been observed, Shintoism does not inculcate any particular system of morality. But though pilgrim hotels do not wish to make their guests practise austerities, they are, like all Japanese hostelries, a trial to European flesh.

‘ Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn ? ’ It is hard to do it in Japan. On the doorstep stand rows of boots and sandals, and before crossing the threshold you must put your own footgear with them and enter in stockings ; for the interior of every Japanese house is carpeted with mats of the finest straw, spotless as damask table-linen, and resplendently yellow. There are no permanent rooms or solid walls. Portions of the interior space are screened off with sliding paper partitions, but these can be moved at will. The outer wall seems one large window, which looks out on a trim garden ; flowers are few, but there are some trees with red blossoms, some trained pines set here and there where they produce the best effect, and a little lake where golden carp lazily flap their large fins. Inside the prospect is less attractive. For ornament there is a vase with a single flower ; for furniture a pile of rugs in an alcove, and a table eight inches high. One seems to be living in two dimensions, like the people painted on porcelain vases. Now, I have few western prejudices, and can do without the European chair, but I like to live in three dimensions, and to have something to sit on. Turks have sofas, China-men seats of various kinds, and even natives of Africa have stools. But among these little people, when one is invited to sit down, one finds only bows and



ROOM IN A JAPANESE TEA HOUSE.

smiles and an exquisitely polished floor. One feels that one has become a human flat-fish, or, at least, that one is expected to behave as such : to glide like a sole over the polished floors, and bring one's lips down to the little footstools, whereon are served tasteless little portions of what looks like gruel in saucers and egg-cups. It is gratifying to find that anthropologists attribute the national shortness to this habit of sitting on the floor, for perhaps the Japanese, who are quite capable of trying to add a cubit to their stature by taking thought, will reform their ways, and adopt attitudes more comfortable to themselves and their guests. But they will have to grow much larger before their houses lose that lilliputian daintiness which at first pleases but then disconcerts Europeans. When sleeping at Yamada, I was awakened by a noise which at first I took for an earthquake : the room quivered with the vibrations of repeated shocks. It proved to be, not an earthquake, but a large green grasshopper, at least six inches long, which was banging itself against the paper walls and shaking the whole doll's house. Yet the physical strength and determined character of the people who live in these frail tenements and eat this unsubstantial food are beyond dispute. But I am forgetting the shrines of Ise.

There are two of them—the Geku, or outer temple, already alluded to ; and the Naiku, or inner temple, which is of even greater sanctity. It lies outside the town, some distance from the Geku, in a wood, and is dedicated to the Sun goddess, from whom the Mikado is believed to be descended. In the holy of holies is no image but an ancient mirror, the emblem of the goddess, and so sacred that not even the priests

may look at it. It is kept in many bags, and when the outermost begins to show signs of wear another is put on, but the inner coverings are never opened. Offerings of food and clothes are presented periodically before the shrine. At the entrance of the wood horses or rickshaws have to be abandoned. Shinto gods must be approached on foot, and sometimes sticks and great-coats have to be discarded. Near the entrance is a river, where pilgrims bathe, and then the road leads up into an open space, which might be an ordinary clearing in a Russian or Canadian forest. On the right is a stable, containing a sacred horse of very ordinary appearance; on the left, a covered stage, where priestesses perform a slow, religious dance, with archaic posturings. All round are building materials—piles of planks and poles, heaps of thatch and sawdust. As structures the temples are not old, and they are pulled down and rebuilt every twenty years. The antiquity consists, not in the fabric, but in the faithful reproduction of every joint and measurement of a model which must date from the earliest period of Japanese history. Immense care is taken in selecting the wood and thatch, which must be perfect of their kind, and when the old temple is pulled down the wood of which it was built is cut up into splinters, and finds a ready sale among the devout.

Beyond this clearing a winding way leads to the temple itself, which, as usual in Japan, consists of several buildings. It stands on a low mound, but is hidden by the surrounding walls. Huge cryptomerias shade the road and sacred precincts, and beneath their leaves and hanging moss the air seems dank and misty. Within the first enclosure is a

second, marked off by a simple fence of white wood, which none may pass except priests and members of the imperial family, for princes are supposed to be kinsmen of the gods, and within this fence stand the shrines—plain, thatched, wooden buildings. Bunches of white paper streamers and bundles of sacred twigs hang before them, but there are hardly any other ornaments. The pilgrims see nothing but wooden sheds—

‘*Et caligantem nigrâ formidine lucum,*’

‘and the grove dark with a horror of gloom.’ Yet the whole place is a monument of prehistoric luxury and labour. The pebbles that pave the courts are all of one size and shape ; the poles and planks are faultless in grain and line ; the twigs are selected with incredible care—above all, the buildings have a remoteness and inaccessibility more impressive than any decoration. The awe of the crowd that dare not pass the simple wooden fence is infectious, and the sacred sheds among the great trees seem to belong to another age and another world. They preach neither doctrine nor morality, and inspire merely the vague fear which made Confucius say one should respect the gods, but keep aloof from them ; but they look like the abode of some primeval power that might exact human labour or life as an offering, and reward the sterner virtues. In such a place might Brennus or Vercingetorix have worshipped the deities of the Druids ; on such altars might a chieftain sacrifice his firstborn to save his country.

It is extraordinary that this ancient, unreasonable, unemotional worship should flourish among one of the most artistic and progressive races of the twentieth

century, among people who found universities and write articles on comparative religion—people whom, in other aspects, one associates with flowers and butterflies and graceful, dainty art. Yet I think that its unemotional simplicity is an expression of one side of Japanese nature, for it is not in the gilded shrines of Buddhism that was forged the temper that beat the Russians.

In saying this, I do not mean to deny that Buddhism is a powerful influence in Japan—more powerful, perhaps, than Shintoism ; for Shintoism is an expression rather than a mould of national feeling, whereas Buddhism is directly didactic. Lafcadio Hearn has shown in several papers how profoundly Japanese thought and feeling are penetrated by its doctrines, particularly the theory of rebirth and successive existences, which is forced into conformity with native ideas about ghosts and ancestor worship. Nevertheless, in spite of the prevalence of these ideas, it does not appear that Buddhism is strong as a directive and guiding force in Japanese life ; one hears much more of past and future births than of following the law of the Buddha in the present existence.

One sect, the Zen, or contemplative school, seems to have played some part in forming the character of the military class in the feudal period. It may seem strange that this peculiarly dreamy doctrine should have appealed to soldiers, but the mysterious exercises of meditative rapture which it taught were based on a mental discipline which began by insisting on the necessity of controlling the mind, and drilling it to resist all influences which could captivate or alarm. The transition from the priestly to the mili-

tary use of meditation is seen in the story of the Buddhist priest who, when seized by brigands and threatened with death, simply absorbed himself in his religious exercises, and so impressed his captors with his indifference to danger that they let him go free. The contempt of life and pleasure is as much a part of a soldier's duty as of a priest's.

The Zen is still much respected in Japan on account of its connection with art, literature, and thoughtful asceticism, but is perhaps becoming a trifle old-fashioned. The most active and in some ways the most interesting sect is that known as Shin Shū, also as Monto. Japanese Buddhist sects are numerous, and illustrate the national proclivity to add an individual stamp to borrowed ideas. They fall into two classes—those introduced from China, and those developed independently on Japanese soil. The Zen is perhaps the most conspicuous example of the former, the Shin Shū of the latter, and as it is a purely Japanese invention, its popularity is easily explained. The liberties which it takes with the doctrines of Buddhism are surprising. Little attention is paid to the founder of the religion or his teaching, and adoration is tendered almost exclusively to Amida, an idealized Buddha, who is Lord of the western paradise, entrance to which after death is obtained by faith in him. The doctrine is thus practically theism and justification by faith. The externals of the sect also indicate a new direction. Most temples and monasteries are built in the country or suburbs (unless the growth of the larger cities has enclosed them), and are clearly the dwellings of recluses who wished to keep apart from mankind as far as their ministry permitted, and dwell

on the edge of humanity. But the temples of the Shin Shū are situated in the midst of towns, and are not endowed, but maintained by voluntary subscriptions; their priests marry, eat flesh, and are hardly distinguished from the laity. Of late years, at any rate, they have shown a most laudable inclination towards works of charity and practical philanthropy, which has perhaps been stimulated by the example of European churches. It is interesting, too, to notice that they are beginning missionary work in China, and, after the example of Europeans, claiming extraterritorial rights for their temples.

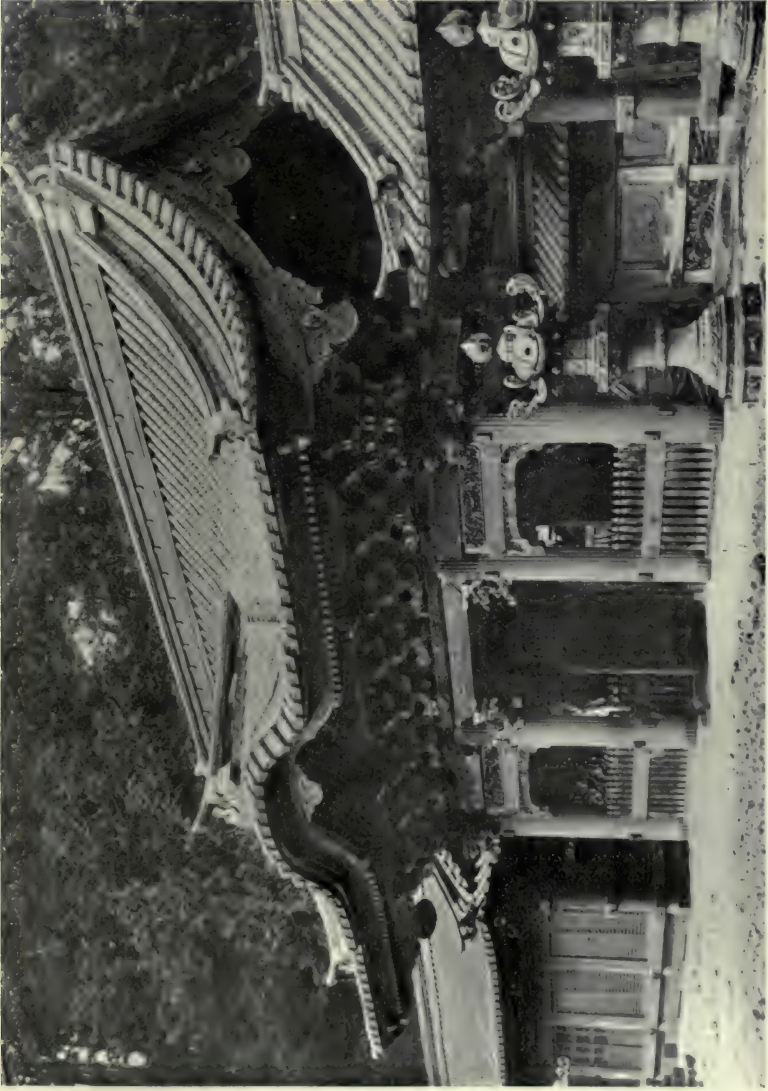
Although there is no proof that the special doctrines of the Shin Shū owe their origin to Christianity, Christian influence does seem to have affected its recent developments, and may be traced in the language of contemporary religious periodicals. Many people, not Christians themselves, told me that the present generation is more favourably disposed towards Christianity than the last. It has ceased to be regarded as a foreign religion, and public opinion recognizes that a good Japanese may belong to it just as well as to any of the Buddhist churches. This is said to be largely the result of the Russian war, in which Christians showed that they were not a people apart or wanting in the national enthusiasm of other Japanese. On the other hand, the national pride is offended by the idea of European clergy coming out on missions to the heathen, and a purely Japanese church would have far more chances of success than evangelization conducted by foreigners. But seeing how the Japanese have transformed Buddhism, Christians may well feel misgivings as to the modifi-

cations the faith might suffer at their hands. The Roman Catholic church in many ways appeals to Japanese æsthetic feelings more than Protestantism, but the idea of belonging to an institution directed from Europe by a foreign chief is repugnant to the majority.

XVI

KAMAKURA AND MISAKI

NEITHER Tokyo nor Yokohama can be considered beautiful. For the defects of the latter Europeans are largely to blame, but even the purely Japanese quarters of Tokyo are somewhat uninteresting. The excellent photographs produced by native artists cannot make the panorama of the capital anything but a dull expanse of roofs, like a grey lake, out of which grow tall chimneys like hideous rushes in far too great profusion. The earthquake gods, defenders of the country's beauty, render it dangerous to build brick shafts as in Europe, but human ingenuity has unfortunately circumvented the difficulty by erecting tall iron tubes, which vomit as much smoke and are even uglier. Also, telegraph wires and posts are extraordinarily conspicuous in the streets. The old conflict between religion and science took the form of a literal collision in Japan, for the high cars used in Shinto religious processions got entangled in the network of wires above the streets. Theology lost. The height of the cars was reduced, and the wires were not moved. Probably the Japanese, in their first enthusiasm for civilization, regarded all the mechanism of science as honourable and lovely, and made no attempt to hide it. Poles and wires are



YASHAMON GATE, NIKKO.

arranged in prominent and complacent avenues down the immense thoroughfares of Tokyo, which are probably the longest in the world, but commonplace in their architecture. It is cosmopolitan in the worst sense: a generalized European type, whose creations have a soulless uniformity, suggesting no particular national character and no particular purpose. The most interesting and beautiful parts are comparatively open spaces, like the Uyeno and Shiba Parks and the grounds of the Asakusa temple. In all these it will be noted that we have the characteristic Japanese combination of architecture and nature—not architecture pleasing by itself.

But the eye meets unexpected pleasures. One does not look for beauty in an umbrella-shop, but when Japanese umbrellas—quite cheap paper articles, but of delicate colour—are opened out and displayed in rows, the effect is quaint and pretty. And then one picturesque feature is universal and ubiquitous—writing. The large signboards and inscriptions are not so brightly coloured as in China, and one observes with regret that of the many varieties of Japanese writing the only ugly one is the simplest and plainest, the Katakana, whose use is said to be on the increase. Still, the graceful curves of Chinese hieroglyphics may be seen spreading over almost ever shop. But though the old-fashioned, common things like umbrellas, lanterns, and signboards, may be picturesque, the streets of Tokyo, Osaka, and other large towns, suggest that among the Japanese of to-day commercial and scientific instincts are growing at the expense of art.

The increasing and eminently successful care bestowed on commerce is most remarkable. It is

surprising that a people who for years have been steeped in military ideas and despised trade should be found ready to devote to mercantile matters the same grave attention and power of organization which they have previously confined to the art of war. Yet it is clear that the Japanese have no intention of remaining a purely or chiefly military nation, and in the very flush of victory their chief preoccupation seems to be the establishment of their finances and the expansion of their trade. The growth of this solid, serious business spirit testifies to the versatility of Japanese genius, and also to the sound common sense in which it is rooted. The finances seem to have been conducted during the period of the war with remarkable skill. The country is not exhausted: it was reported that the deposits in the Tokyo savings banks had increased by £6,000,000 during the first six months of 1906, and 183 new companies were formed, with an aggregate capital of £25,000,000. Such an increase argues a sound financial basis.

The special features of Japanese commerce appear to be power of co-operation and government support. Though Japanese merchants have a poor reputation for loyalty in commercial dealings, yet the spirit of combination which leads to the formation of guilds and associations for the most various objects in all parts of the Far East disposes them to common action, and the support of government often adds coherency and vigour to such action. During the Tokugawa period, when the islands were closed to the rest of the world, the government had a monopoly of foreign trade. It bought from the Dutch, and sold to Japanese. Such simple methods of pro-

cedure, are, of course, nowadays things of the past, but the idea of conducting commercial enterprise under the patronage and direction of the state seems more natural both to the government and to the mercantile community than in Europe, and is a powerful method for pushing trade.

The South Manchurian Railway Company has been formed with official assistance, not only for the prosecution of traffic by land and water, but for warehousing and for mining. It is supported by powerful combinations of merchants organized for the purpose of pushing Japanese wares in Manchuria, and also for bringing the raw produce of Manchuria to Japan, and there working it up. The Yokohama Specie Bank is extending its branches and operations, which are already multifarious. Trade with China is said to have increased by £3,000,000, and Japanese shipping on the Yangtse is second only to that of Great Britain. Owing to its proximity, and the many ties which unite the two countries, the Chinese market is likely to occupy Japanese commerce for some time, though it will not monopolize it. Lines of steamers to the South Seas and the coast of South America, which are being started at present, indicate that the nation is beginning to feel the wider ambitions of extended commerce, and the joy of sending argosies over equatorial oceans.

But it is to be feared that this growth of the commercial spirit is blunting the artistic sense of the nation: recent monuments erected in Tokyo are neither satisfactory nor promising, and the influence of science is not more æsthetic than that of commerce. The Japanese have mastered all the developments and complications of engineering and electricity, but

they have not imparted any of the national grace and daintiness to apparatus and engines, which are in Japan even more ungainly than elsewhere. The command of hand and brain which served them so well as artists secures equal excellence in the practical applications of mechanics, and their intelligence shows a strong inclination in this direction at the present moment. It is often said with some disparagement that the Japanese have made no great discoveries in science. It would be very extraordinary if they had, for it is surely no mean achievement to have started with a *tabula rasa*, and within fifty years have assimilated the whole practical science of Europe on the large scale shown by their army, navy, telegraphs, and railways. For theoretical research there has hardly been time. But they clearly have a real aptitude for some of the physical sciences. If they have shown no great originality, they at least do good research work, and they make excellent doctors. Having had occasion to employ one, I can answer, not only for their skill, but for the confidence which they inspire in the patient—a confidence which I think one would not feel in an Arab or Hindu, though he might be equally well educated.

Historical science languishes, and it is extremely curious to hear that the government deliberately discourage it. From a practical point of view, I am not sure that they are wrong, for familiarity with the ways of governments certainly breeds contempt. A good history of Japan is a thing still to be written, but sound and harmless knowledge in other branches is supported. Attention is paid to the scientific sides of agriculture and fisheries, and one of the most interesting excursions which I made was to

the Marine Biological Laboratory at Misaki, founded on the model of the establishments at Naples and Plymouth for the study of marine zoology.

The journey to Misaki is a pleasant but rather lengthy excursion, for the railway takes one only part of the way, and the rest has to be done by rickshaw or by water. To the south of Yokohama lies a little peninsula containing some well-known seaside resorts, such as Kamakura and Enoshima, but otherwise somewhat out of the world, and peopled by fishermen, professors, and strange deities with their priests—an odd mixture, but perhaps characteristic of Japan. The way lies through Kamakura, one of the many old capitals, and celebrated for its Daibutsu—a gigantic bronze statue of Amida, fabricated in the thirteenth century. I must confess that I am somewhat a heretic in the matter of this famous image, which has received unreserved praise from most writers. Striking it certainly is—a great meditative figure seated in an avenue—but I do not feel that it expresses ‘the soul of all the East,’ or that it is one of the greatest masterpieces of Buddhist art. Probably those who have praised it with most enthusiasm came to Kamakura from America, and as a contrast to Chicago its calm would no doubt seem impressive. But those who come to Japan from the other side, as I did, will probably agree that the face is wanting in force and intelligence. Indian sculpture keeps the head of such images erect, and makes it plain that in meditation the mind, though self-centred, is active within. But in the Daibutsu the head and shoulders droop forward, and I cannot get rid of the feeling that the image is dozing—an amiable priest nodding over an unusually long litany

It is seen to its greatest advantage from outside the garden, where the head appears rising above the trees; seen from in front, it does not look its real height—fifty feet—but this is no fault of the artist, but a peculiarity of all great statues. It would seem that when the eye sees an unusual object it assesses it simply according to bulk, not according to shape—that is to say, it takes note that a colossus is not particularly large compared to a building, rather than that it is gigantic compared to a man.

Even the largest statue in Japan, the Daibutsu of Nara, which is in an open hall, fails to impress at first sight, though one gradually realizes its proportions by comparison. When I saw it, it was undergoing repair, and I wondered what was moving on the face. It was a man, and as the face is sixteen feet long, and the workman crossing it was not much more than five feet high it is not surprising that he looked like an insect. The images that appear really gigantic are those which are dimly seen. Such are the great reclining Buddhas in Cingalese caves, where the feeble lamps carried by the guides are insufficient to light up the whole figure at once, and suggest an immensity of mysterious bulk. Very imposing, too, is the statue of Maitreya, in the Lama temple at Peking. It is nearly eighty feet high, and extends through two stories of a somewhat dim temple. As a work of art it is mediocre, but the worshippers kneeling at its gigantic feet have a distant vision of a powerful and benevolent face, and, as seen from the upper galleries, the priests and candles in the depths down below look pathetically minute and helpless.

The country about Kamakura and all the neighbourhood of Tokyo and Yokohama is disfigured by

another kind of gigantic images, which modern Japan honours with deplorable assiduity—namely, advertisements. Nowhere in Europe or America are these eyesores more impertinently prominent, not only in towns and railway-stations, but in country scenes which would be beautiful without them. The size of the things is monstrous: inscriptions legible half a mile off cover the side of a hill with the praises of some soap or mouth-wash; a bottle twenty feet high bids you drink freely of a certain beer; and a colossus in evening dress offers pills which will cure you if you take too much of it. It is hard to believe that the Japanese of to-day are essentially artistic, when they not only tolerate but revel in these vulgarities.

Fortunately, the advertisements stop long before one reaches Misaki, probably because the inhabitants are poor fishermen who don't want pills, and have not money enough to buy beer. For some way the road runs by the sea, passing a series of capes which offer all the combinations of rocks, pines, and waves, of which Japanese art is so fond, and then strikes inland. The cottagers in this part of the world encourage plants to grow on their roofs, which become veritable flower-gardens or fields of waving grass. The ground below does not seem very fertile; there is plenty of wild and, doubtless, uncultivable land. But clearly it is a country of sailors rather than agriculturists, as the crowd of boats in every bay testifies.

The laboratory of Misaki is a pleasing mixture of science and romance, for it is an old castle, with well-authenticated ghosts. It seems a thousand pities that the Psychological Research Society cannot utilize this unusual combination. It is so rare to find together a noted haunt of ghosts and all the materials

for bottling and preserving them scientifically. A sudden douche of picric acid is recommended for killing and 'fixing' shadowy marine organisms, and at Misaki there is every opportunity for trying its effect on a marine ghost. In the Middle Ages the owners of the castle committed suicide rather than fall into the hands of their enemies—the men with the sword, and the women by throwing themselves into the sea. By daylight the castle wears a decorously scientific aspect, and presents a view such as is usual in laboratories—microscopes under bell-glasses, tanks of living coral, and rows of glass jars, out of which pickled octopuses and other marine monsters gaze malevolently on still living anatomists. But on certain nights even stranger sights may be seen. The drowned beauties rise out of the sea, and headless men wander on the shore. Another interesting collocation of old and new is the shrine of the goddess Benten, a marine deity and one of the seven gods of luck, which is in a cave close to the laboratory. Fishermen do not fail to propitiate her before putting out to sea, and it is thought that professors do just as well to acknowledge her existence by an offering before commencing their researches.

Japanese in the past have shown more aptitude for mythical zoology than for the severer aspects of the science, and it is evident that strange beasts had a special fascination and interest for them. As all critics have observed, their pictures of horses, cats, and dogs are poor, but in delineating birds, insects, and things with many limbs and queer shapes, they have the life-giving touch of true sympathy. They are the only people I know who have treated the case of the jelly-fish with insight, and written a story

about his sad failure in life with appropriate illustrations. The jelly-fish, it seems, was not always such a hopelessly flabby personage as now. He had never, perhaps, a backbone, and he certainly had not much brain, but still he had legs and a tail, and went his own way with a will of his own, instead of lolloping through life in his present aimless fashion. One day the wife of the dragon who rules at the bottom of the sea fell ill, and stuck to it that nothing could cure her but a meal of monkey's liver. So the jelly-fish was sent off post-haste to catch a monkey, and actually succeeded in persuading one to get on his back and set out on a cruise across the sea. But that was the extent of his diplomacy. Once started, he couldn't hold his tongue, and told the monkey what he, or rather his liver, was wanted for. The monkey grasped the situation, and behaved with great intelligence. He would be delighted to be of service to the sea-dragon and his queen, he said, but the jelly-fish had taken him unawares without explaining what was wanted, and so he had not thought of bringing his liver, but had left it hanging on a tree. It was a troublesome sort of thing, he said, and he didn't take it out with him to dinner, as a rule, because it had a way of making itself ill; but if the jelly-fish would turn back he could get it in a moment. The foolish creature agreed, and landed the monkey, who, after climbing up a safe tree, explained the situation with some humour. So the jelly-fish went back empty-handed—or, rather, empty-backed—and had not even the wit to invent a plausible story, but confessed his own stupidity and told the simple truth. For this he received such a thrashing that all his bones were

broken, and he has ever since remained a helpless, feckless lump of jelly.

A similar story is of curiously wide distribution, and is told on the coast of East Africa, of a monkey and a shark. From a scientific point of view, perhaps, it is more plausible if told of a jelly-fish; for a shark, having a well-furnished inside of his own, would hardly have been imposed on by the monkey's yarn, whereas the jelly-fish, having no liver at all, might think it was something that could be left at home like an umbrella.

THE END





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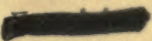
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